

Heart of Dark(y)ness:
Negotiating race and racism in New Zealand rugby: Club
rugby players talk rugby

This thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts in Māori and Indigenous Studies in the
University of Canterbury

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University of Canterbury
2017

Abstract

Racism in New Zealand rugby has been a topic of ongoing debate. In 2011 and 2010, for example, there was a mediated discussion about supposed racial quotas ('darkies' quota) for The Crusaders and criticism of Pat Lam, the Samoan Coach of the Blues, for the team's poor performance. This thesis locates such public controversies as part of 'sports-chatter', informed by the work of Lynne Star, that is, as talk about rugby by players, fans and media commentators. In particular, the thesis explores the ways in which rugby players (who are also fans and consumers of mediated sports news) engage in sports-chatter as they made sense of the mediated debates above, draw on their own experiences of playing rugby, race, racism and being rugby fans. The strengths and limitations of using mediated debates as a research strategy to facilitate talk are also examined.

The research uses critical analyses of race and sport to explore how male, rugby players in New Zealand drew on and challenged available discourses of race and racism as they responded to the mediated controversies from 2010 and 2011. The conversations about racism in rugby in four focus groups demonstrate the ways in the participants understand, read and experience race and racism, that is, how they read and participate in sports-chatter. A thematic analysis is employed to explore how the participants negotiate what constitutes racism in the mediated debates; how race discourse is reproduced and disrupted in the focus groups; experiences of encountering racial abuse; and challenging racism in rugby. Analysis focuses on the multiple ways that race and racism are made meaningful through the participants' talk about mediated debates and their own experiences.

Acknowledgements

Many people have helped me along the journey and I would like acknowledge all the words of encouragement I have received. Firstly to my supervisors, thank you for your commitment to my kaupapa and to me. Tiina, I would not have completed the journey without your support, guidance and expertise. Lyndon, thank you for your council, knowledge and encouragement. My heart-felt thanks goes to both of you.

Ka nui te mihi ki te whānau o Aotahi. Sacha McMeeking, you've been generous with unwavering faith, and positivity. Lynne Harata Te Aika, you patiently persisted until I was ready to get it done. Garrick, for your words and ideas, thank you Hukapapa. Aku mihi hoki ki a Karen, ko Teena koutou ko professor Jeanette. Thanks also to College of Arts staff at UC.

I acknowledge participants who gave their time and provided discussion for this research. I am indebted to you all for your willingness to talk and share with me.

To the Kut - Bus, Philly, K and Rā, and the brothers Junior and Corban. We keep it moving.

My whānau – ki ōku kaumatua, Nana, Papa, Grandma, Grandpa, Uncle John and Aunty Angela, thank you for your direction. Dad, your encouragement and words about resilience have been a source of solace to me; Mum, T and Rah – celebratory cheesecake time. Aunty Huri and uncle, Carol and Kevin, my nephews and nieces, Hix and the Toto whanau, Watson whānau whānui, and Kahi whānui, ka nui te mihi ki a koutou. Ki āku kōhine raukura, Hine-Atarau kōrua ko Anahera, you are my motivation and distraction. Rana, your love and support has sustained and maintained me, ka nui te aroha.

Contents

Abstract	2
Acknowledgements	3
Glossary	6
Glossary of colloquialisms and rugby terms	6
Chapter One: Introduction	8
<i>The Window</i>	8
<i>Introducing the researcher</i>	9
<i>Introducing the research and research problem</i>	11
<i>Talking sport – sports chatter</i>	14
<i>Mediated Story 1 – The Canterbury Crusaders’ ‘Darkies’ Quota</i>	20
<i>Mediated Story 2 – The problem of ‘Too Many Darkies’ in the Auckland Blues</i>	24
<i>Chapter Breakdown</i>	28
Chapter Two: Literature Review	30
<i>Race, racism and sport</i>	30
<i>Beyond a boundary</i>	31
<i>‘Stacking’ and racial stereotypes</i>	33
<i>Racialisation in sport-media</i>	34
<i>Theories of race in sport</i>	37
<i>Race and rugby in New Zealand</i>	40
<i>Using media to research race</i>	43
Chapter Three: Methodology - research design and methods	47
<i>Focus Groups</i>	47
<i>Identifying media</i>	49
<i>Recruitment of focus group participants</i>	51
<i>The makeup of the focus groups</i>	55
<i>Conducting the focus groups</i>	58
<i>Thematic analysis</i>	60
<i>Steps of analysis</i>	61
Chapter Four: reading race and racism	63
<i>Negotiating what constitutes racism in the mediated debates</i>	64
<i>Reproducing race discourse: Sports-chatter and racialised athletic performance</i>	68
<i>Encountering racial abuse in rugby</i>	75
<i>Challenges to racism in rugby</i>	83

Chapter Five: Conclusion	90
<i>Future directions</i>	92
References	96
Appendices.....	110
<i>Appendix 1 – Letter sent to invite rugby clubs</i>	111
<i>Appendix 2</i>	112
<i>Appendix 3</i>	114
<i>Appendix 4</i>	115
<i>Appendix 5</i>	117
<i>Appendix 6</i>	118

Glossary

ABs	All Blacks (see All Blacks)
All Blacks	The New Zealand men's national rugby union team
ARL	Australian Rules League
Auckland Blues	New Zealand Super rugby franchise
Black Caps	New Zealand men's national cricket team
Browning of rugby	More Māori and Pasifika professional rugby players
Canterbury Crusaders	New Zealand Super rugby franchise
Haka	Māori chant, war-dance
KMT	Kaupapa Māori Theory
Mana	Pride, power, authority, respect
Māori	Indigenous peoples of New Zealand
New Zealand Warriors	New Zealand's sole entry into the NRL competition (see NRL)
NRL	National Rugby League
NZRFU	New Zealand Rugby Football Union
NZRU	New Zealand Rugby Union
NZRL	New Zealand Rugby League
Otago Highlanders	New Zealand Super rugby franchise
Pākehā	New Zealander or European descent, foreign or exotic
Poly-saturation	More Māori and Pasifika professional rugby players
RFU	Rugby Football Union
Super Rugby	Premier professional rugby competition between teams from Australia, New Zealand and South Africa
Waikato Chiefs	New Zealand Super rugby franchise
Wellington Hurricanes	New Zealand Super rugby franchise
Whānau	Family, wider family

Glossary of colloquialisms and rugby terms

Bro	Term of endearment – Māori
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Bro team	Sports team with a high composition of Māori and Pasifika
Bunga	Derogatory insult for Pacific Islander
Coconut	Often an insult for Pacific Islander
Cuz	Term of endearment, short for cousin - Māori
Fulla	Fellow
Hori	Often an insult – stereotype of Māori in urban poverty
FOB	Often an insult – Fresh of the boat
Five eight	First five eight is a central rugby position
Freshy	Often an insult – short for Fresh of the boat
Gook	Derogatory insult for Asian
Loosie	Position in rugby - Loose forward

Chapter One: Introduction

The Window

12.27a.m. Bang, bang, bang. Loud knock on the window.

The noise registers; the rhythm of little brother's snoring is interrupted. Big brother speaks through the window. "Bro... forgot my keys again. Get the door?" Little brother accepts, and walks sluggishly to the front door.

House lights flick on. Drawer slides open. Utensils clatter. Pan touches oven. Can-opener turns. Toaster taps down. Baked-beans sizzle. Cheese grates. The brothers move wordlessly, economic in their routine. Little brother yawns. Kai is ready, and consumed quickly. Empty plates hit the sink.

Big brother moves. He snaps the latches of the back door, slides it open, and disappears into darkness. Little brother follows and pauses at the door. He exchanges bare feet for kicks. Eyes adjust to the moonlight. The brothers walk over a green lawn and past the trellis fence line that conceals their 'garden.'

Small clumps of grass border large patches of compressed earth. Much of the grass gave up growing years ago. A steel structure rises in the corner of the dirt court. Years of white electrical tape holds net to hoop, catching any light. The ball waits under a drooping houhere tree. It's picked up, then driven down on the hard terrain. An educated hand reads its bounce.

Thump, thump, thump, thump, pause, swish.

Big brother is ready.

A neighbour's security light switches on, capturing the disturbed evening air. The brothers are oblivious to its intention to discourage them. The light hits the backboard perfectly. Little brother bends knees, put hands out. D's up. Little brother is ready.

Two brothers know, as they say, that heaven is a playground.

Introducing the researcher

Tēnei au, te uri nā Pare Hauraki me Pare Waikato.

My interest in this research project is due in part to a passion for sports. As a kid I dabbled with playing sports including rugby, league, touch, soccer, volleyball, softball, tennis, and even one cricket match. Whereas most kiwi boys are typically described as dreaming of being an All Black, despite only growing to 1.78m, mine was a hoop dream. In the pre-internet age of 1980s and 90s I tried to catch as much of the brief coverage of the NBA basketball that was available to me.

The two back yards that I grew up in, respectively, were both adorned with homemade basketball courts. The second was replete with a custom welded 10 foot 2 inch backboard and hoop that my dad put up. One family legend tells of my mum and aunty finding a discarded hoop and backboard in a vacant site. It came home tied ‘down’ on top of a car bonnet, with my mum providing the ‘down’ anchor by hanging on to the ropes in the front passenger seat. As in my short introductory story, my older brother and I spent many hours on our court, along with friends, educating ourselves through hoop dreams. We philosophised about favourite players, best moves, music, shoes, girls, and life – probably in that order. I am not sure when I surrendered to the magnetism of sports, whether watching, playing or competing, but it happened early.

Growing up Māori in Christchurch, I encountered racism and micro-aggressions. An early experience happened when I was, maybe seven or eight. I was sent off to a church kids-camp along with my brother, and three similarly aged cousins. At the camp we were split up in to smaller aged-based groups. My cousin Eli and I were grouped together. For the rest of the day we engaged in a number of activities, and by design, we got to know each other better, making friendships.

At a scheduled free time slot on the second day, my group were hanging out in the cabin. Amidst some jokes being told, one of the boys jumped off his bunk-bed and began to talk excitedly to the group, in my direction: “When God made us, he put us in the toaster, but he left you in the toaster too long so you came out black and burnt...”. From my recollection, this particular boy had been quiet and slower to

make friends, and I had gone out of my way to be nice to him. I was confused. “When God made us, we were dishes and he had to wash us but he left you dirty...”. I had a sense that these jokes were wrong, but not necessarily knowing why, only that my cousin and I were being picked on. I looked around the room at the boys and in their laughing and smirks I felt distance, isolating Eli and I from them. The one boy continued: “When God made us we were people, and you were the snake that had to crawl on the ground and that’s why you’re dirty.”

Eli, a year older than I, was the biggest, and in my mind, coolest kid in the group. Within my world-view, cool and older was the only form of currency. When I looked to him to say something back, he sat silent with his head down. I leapt to the floor and tried to summon a few choice lines of my own, reaching for some retort about lemon dish washing liquid. The other boy kept going and it was clear that I was losing a battle of wits. I still had a card to play, the ultimate ace in the hole for any playground dispute, I had an older brother, and cousins! We were the only five Māori boys at the whole camp.

Eli and I ran off to tell them what had happened. Due to the dirt clod wars, games of bull-rush, tea-towel whip battles, and rolled-up newspapers fights with my brother and cousins, I anticipated some physical retribution or verbal reprimand. But my brother and cousins took a more serious course of action, seeking out the adult leader of my group. As they started to tell him what had happened, my eldest cousin and brother, each four years older than I, began to cry. Their tears registered with me and at the sight I cried too. The group leader stammered an acknowledgement of what we had said, and that was it. Nothing. Whether apprehensive or indifferent, he told us “you’ll be fine” and not to bring it up again. The five of us retreated quietly to ourselves for the remaining days of camp.

Things worked against my expectations that day. Being picked-on, my sense of who I was and who we were, the belief that an adult would intervene, but each of my expectations was fractured. I single this story out as a reflection that introduced me to an experience of being ‘othered’ and to a set of often subtle behaviours that I and

many negotiate regularly. These experiences contribute to my interest in the research kaupapa explored in this thesis.

Introducing the research and research problem

In this thesis I undertake research at the intersection of race, racism and sport. The aim of the research is to explore male, club rugby players' talk about race and racism using examples from New Zealand rugby. Examples from high-profile incidents of race and racism in New Zealand rugby were presented to the participants as mediated debates in the form of news clips. The participants' were invited to discuss their readings of the mediated debates as well as their own experiences. Their talk highlights the complexity of race and racism in rugby as they both reproduced race discourse and challenged/resisted racism. Further, the participants provide examples and understandings of race and racism across the game and activity of rugby and into the sports-media complex. There are a number of research priority areas and concepts contributing to the direction of research.

Throughout this thesis I explore the multiple meanings attributed to race and racism. Race has been defined as a categorising agent, or as the ideological belief that people can be classified into 'races' apparent in biological phenotypes and physical variation (Barkan, 1992). Racism is the application or belief that 'races' can be ranked along a hierarchy in terms of superiority and inferiority (Miles and Brown, 2003). I use Critical Race Theory (CRT) and other critical analyses of sport, race and identity to analyse race. As a starting position for this research CRT treats race as a socially constructed phenomenon. Gordon's (1999) descriptive article on the genealogy of CRT traces the approach to the foundational figures of Frantz Fanon (1952) and W.E.B. DuBois (1897, 1903). Subsequent post-positivist scholarship on race (such as Goldberg, 1993, 1997; Omi and Winant, 1994; Alcoff, 2006; Gilroy, 1993) appeals to the construction of race. Positioning race as a social construct rejects the explanations of biological determinism, but does not treat race as a fiction. Rather this approach focuses on how the social functions as its own reality, where meanings are attributed to it through context and social relations. Therefore race can have multiple meanings that are fluid and may change, or even be contradictory and paradoxical.

Ethnicity is a concept that is also used to categorise people. Race and ethnicity are usually distinguished by associating race with social meanings given to biology such as phenotypical differences including skin colour and associating ethnicity with cultural differences (Hylton, 2009; Van Sterkenberg, Knoppers & de Leeuw, 2012). These constructs overlap and have conflated meanings in everyday discourse (Brubaker et al., 2004; Essed & Trienekens, 2008). For this research I favour focussing on race and racism due to the language used in the examples of the mediated debates, however I acknowledge meanings attributed to ethnicity as the need arises. This research incorporates the perspectives of multiple ethnic groups in New Zealand. The four major ethnic communities that comprise New Zealand demographics are represented to some degree in the research. Māori are the indigenous peoples of New Zealand, with Māori men participating in rugby from the formative stages of its introduction. While Pākehā refers to white New Zealanders, the term also connects to New Zealand's colonial history with Britain. Asian New Zealanders are the third largest ethnicity, deriving from a range of Asian nations. Pasifika refers to the peoples who originate from the Pacific Island community, including Samoan, Tongan, Fijian, Cook Islander and Niuean. There are overlaps within these communities, contributing many identity formations New Zealand (Baumann, 1999).

Sport scholarship position sport as a meaningful cultural institution and a significant site to research race and racism. Hartmann (2012) notes its importance is because of the popularity and attention it receives, the prominence of people of colour within sport, and the way sport espouses principles of meritocracy which align with capitalistic principles such as meritocracy. Rugby in New Zealand is a dynamic canvas. 'Our' game has come to symbolize the nation, helping to construct a form of national identity that is reinforced by ideologies of 'tradition', 'masculinity' and 'equality'. Rugby is an important part of the national mythology in New Zealand - a metaphor for national character - and has played an important societal role for Māori, Pākehā and Pasifika men (Phillips, 1996; Walker, 2004; Grainger, 2009). Sports such as rugby are represented as quintessentially meritocratic where characteristics of strength, fitness, physical and psychological skill, lead to success.

There is symmetry in the myth of the level playing field and the claims of New Zealand's history of good race relations. For example, Phillips writes, Māori success in rugby carried the idea that New Zealand was a racially harmonious society (1996: 286). A significant element in research on race and racism in New Zealand rugby is the presumption of absence, or lack of acknowledgement. The confrontational sporting relationships with apartheid South Africa is the exception, albeit historic.¹ Sport in New Zealand, as in a number of western societies, is more often promoted for its values of racial equality and progress. The involvement of Māori in rugby since its early colonial introduction and a historical lack of formal barriers in playing sport, have helped sustain the view that racism in New Zealand rugby is not a significant problem. As an example, prominent scholar Ranginui Walker who has been a leading critic of race relations in New Zealand, describes Māori as "passionately devoted to rugby, the national sport in which they found ready acceptance on equal terms with the Pākehā" (2004: 175).

Dedicated research on Māori and Pasifika in sport led by the likes of Hokowhitu (2001, 2003, 2004, 2008, 2010), Palmer (2005, 2008, 2010) and Grainger (2009a, 2009b) have challenged the assumption that sport has only been good for race relations. They have refuted the successes for Māori as exaggerations (Palmer, 2005) or occurring in the context of entrenched colonialism (Hokowhitu, 2003; 2008), and have examined how the presence of Māori and Pasifika peoples have been racialised as problematic within New Zealand sport.

These shifting dialectic positions, including the status of rugby as the national game, the resilient belief of positive sporting race-relations, the racialisation of Māori and Pasifika peoples, as well as significant scholarship on sport and racism correspond to the significance of rugby in New Zealand as a site of social research. An additional research priority area is the relationship between sport and media.

¹ South African sporting tours

The relationship between sports and media has grown significantly from the broadcasting of match fixtures. The result of this growth is referred to as the ‘sport-media complex’. Rowe, for example, argues that the boundaries of sport and the sports media have become increasingly blurred and their fortunes entwined: “Newspapers and the wider media have become so intimately involved in sport – and vice versa – as to suggest a convergence of these formally (and formerly) separate institutions” (2005: 127). The emergence of online, social and interactive media has further fuelled the appetite for sports news.

There is an established body of literature that attends to the study of race and sport-media. The research has contributed to deconstructing race and racism through content analysis of sports media (Blain & Bernstein, 2003; Wenner, 1998). There are fewer examples that consider how sports audiences interpret these issues (Davis & Harris, 1998; Millington & Wilson, 2010). Billings et al. (2012) write that sports media has only recently begun to report on issues around race, where it had previously avoided the topic. Sport administrators have also been criticised for distancing themselves from issues of race and racism (Long et al., 2000). Race and racism discourse is produced at the level of every day interactions and at the institutional level of the media (Essed, 2002; van Dijk, 1992). Research that acknowledges these interactions are important to chart understandings of the racial discourses present in sport.

Talking sport – sports chatter

Sports-chatter, as the term suggests, is defined as talk that pertains to sport. In general terms, talk has long been acknowledged as influencing the construction of identity (Callero 2003; Tsang, 2000). Sport, and talking about sport, is also recognized as having a profound impact on the formulation of masculine identity (Messner, 1992; Nylund, 2003).

To date, there has been no empirical research on the role of sports-chatter in constructing or reproducing race and racism. I use sports chatter to frame the research agenda. My contention is that there is a two-way relationship between sports-

chatter and race: sports-chatter both conveys the narratives that construct race and racial identities and racial identities are performed/lived in sporting contexts.

This thesis locates race in the discursive practices of a sports audience. This type of talk can be considered sports-chatter, and the empirical components of this research have generated it by providing mediated debates to stimulate talk about rugby (Whannel, 2009). The use of focus groups involving rugby players provided a context to explore participants' sports chatter and the ways in which they responded to mediated debates of race and racism in rugby. This facilitated an investigation of how "some media images are reconstructed, reinforced and reiterated through social interaction" (Kitzinger, 1994). I start with defining sports-chatter and the criteria or elements that can identify it.

Sports-chatter involves the way people consume sport, not so much by playing or watching it as by talking about playing and watching it. The term was first defined by Eco (1986) as a phenomenon of how men talk, about sport. Eco had a pejorative perspective of sports-chatter, apparent in his descriptions of it as a phatic discourse. He described it as meaningless, an attempt of sports followers to insert themselves in to action that they did not participate in, acting as a form of voyeurism:

And since chatter about sport gives the illusion of interest in sport, the notion of practicing sport becomes confused with that of talking sport; the chatterer thinks himself an athlete and is no longer aware that he doesn't engage in sport. (Eco, 1986: 37)

A number of writers engage with Eco's idea. Whannel (2009: 76-77) describes sports-chatter as a form of exchange, "in which analysis of events and of tactics, of players and of performances bends with anecdote, banter and reminiscence." Sugden and Tomlinson (2010) describe sports-chatter as exhibiting a type of cultural capital, where the producers belong to a linguistic community. They state that central to understanding sports-chatter is that as a form of male cultural capital exchange. Star (1988) describe how sports-chatter works to exclude women and those who do not take part in the hyper-masculine talk. Whannel (2008) goes as far as to give sports-chatter a location - it happens on 'planet sport.' The allusion to a planet describes the

activity as a domain that works to bind a community that is interested in sport as a culture and severing itself from the rest of the world, “It is a space with its own values, rituals and symbols” (Whannel, 2008: 77).

A massive sports-chatter industry fuels consumer engagement in to sport and provides platforms for recurring sports-chatter amongst audiences. On television in the United States there are whole networks devoted to sports, such as ESPN and its highlight show *SportsCenter* that has five daily editions that are broadcast up to 12 times a day. While not on the same scale, sports television in New Zealand is popular with talking head shows like *the Crowd Goes Wild* and *Code*, and multiple channels devoted to sport on paid satellite television, including a dedicated Rugby Channel. Sports-chatter works to fill in the 6 days and 22 hours of the week when ‘the footy’ is not on. Much of these sport shows do not feature the action, but rather discussion, analysis, debate and statistical information (Rowe, 1982). As indicated above, Eco connects sports-chatter to sport-media, writing that it is a collapse of discussion of sport through broadcast to discussions that become self-referential:

The discussion is in the first place that of the sports press, but it generates in turn discussions on the sport press, and therefore sport raised to the n^{th} power. The discussion on the sports press is discourse on a discourse about watching others’ sports as discourse (Eco, 1986: 162).

Sports-chatter becomes a self-consuming activity where discourse and stories transfer between sport-media and sports-consumer. Similar to discursive practices where talking influences identity, sports-chatter draws on, reproduces and/or challenges particular discourses of gender and race (Messner, 1997).

I contend that as club rugby players engage in talking about rugby, they engage in sports-chatter. In the context of this research, focus groups provided an opportunity to see sports-chatter in action. Male club rugby players, who identified as Māori, Pasifika and Pākehā, and who followed and supported particular rugby teams engaged in broad ranging talk about rugby and other sports. As Wilkinson argues, focus groups provide an ideal setting from which to explore how identities are socially constructed that “insofar as individual opinions are formed and shaped through talking and arguing

with family, friends, and colleagues about events and issues in everyday life, focus groups tap into ordinary social processes and everyday interchange” (1998: 120). For this research project, the timing of the group interviews was such that either one of the State of Origin rugby league series, an international All Black series or the concluding rounds of the NRL and Super Rugby seasons were being played. These provided a starting point for the group interviews.

This is illustrated in the following excerpt of dialogue. I asked the question of the group about who they were supporting in the Australian rugby league competition, the State of Origin², and they responded:

HK: So who’ve you guys got tonight?

Hemi (Māori, 30): Queenslander!

Ryan (Māori, 34): Yeah, hearty.

Neihana (Māori, 29): Blues all day. It’s our year [laughs].

Craig (Māori, 36): All I know is Gallen³ ain’t getting off tonight. Queensland.

Hemi: Yeah bro. Queensland is squaring up tonight. They’re not losing at Suncorp⁴. And JT⁵ is back, [he has] shook off game 1.

Craig: Their backs weren’t sharp. The thing is they played their... they aren’t playing worse than that, and they still almost won. And they know it. That’s why you don’t hear from him [points at Neihana]. Blues don’t know how to handle the lead.

Neihana: Gallen’s gonna crush em. He’s built for Origin you know. We got game 1 and we got this.

² The State of Origin is a representative, three game series played by the Queensland Maroons and the New South Wales Blues. Representatives are chosen from teams in the Australian National Rugby League (NRL) competition. The representatives are chosen based on their state origin of birth or first rugby league club as juniors. The phrase ‘mate vs mate’ describes how NRL teammates might end up playing each other in the series. It is notable for its high-intensity and traditionally close-scoring matches.

³ Paul Gallen – New South Wales Blues captain

⁴ Suncorp stadium is the home stadium of the Queensland team

⁵ Jonathon Thurston – halfback for Queensland Maroons. Arguably greatest rugby league player of his generation

Craig: [interrupts] You won't ever win with Gallen as the captain. He whinges too much. Every interview he's talking that poor me. He got the same bottom drop lip as [name deleted]. And Hayne's⁶ out.

Neihana: True, true, that hurts. But Dugan⁷ is gonna be alright.

Hemi: Dugan ain't done shit [all laugh]. How do you even be a Blues fan?

This excerpt demonstrates sports-chatter in a number of ways. There is a shared literacy amongst the participants. The cultural capital amongst the group as sports and league enthusiasts is reflected in the language used. A number of statements indicate sports colloquialisms, such as: ain't getting off tonight; squaring up; shook off game 1; we got game 1; backs weren't sharp; don't know how to handle the lead; crush 'em. Other statements are localised to the characteristics of the competition itself: It's our year; built for Origin. Acronyms and Māori colloquialisms are also used.

Despite being about an Australian based rugby league competition the question about who they support generates plenty of interest in New Zealand. Hemi aligns himself with the team's Australian support base with his call of 'Queenslander', a call which locates him within the tradition of the competition.⁸ The three other group members state their preferred team, and as soon as Neihana says who he supports, the to-and-fro banter begins. The inter-play is made in brief. Last names and acronyms such as 'JT' are the preferred method of naming players as proof of familiarity. The arguments they make do not need to be long, but are expansive in their number. The reasons why each team will win are not made to persuade the other party rather they are statements of fact that reflect the support for their team. The analysis is conducted: pivotal players; the advantage of home ground; the close result from the first game; the performance and attitude players; the past performance of players; the return to health and injury of other players are all given as reasons as to why the opposing teams will win. Each point from the Queensland trio of supporters is a jibe directed at Neihana.

⁶ Jarryd Hayne - NSW Blues fullback

⁷ Josh Dugan – NSW Blues fullback and replacement for Jarryd Hayne

⁸ 1995 series where it was used as a rally call

As the teammates compete over which team is worthy of support, towards the end of the exchange Neihana concedes territory in the line “true, true, that hurts...”. This culminates in the question that Hemi asks “how do you even be a Blues fan?” It is a provocative question that is asked to destabilise Neihana’s support for the team. As a form of sports-chatter it is a question that is repeated annually, particular to the State of Origin series because it is played by Australians in Australia along strict geographical lines. Every year, part of the build in New Zealand involves talk back or social media chatter about which team they support. In this way it marks seasonality. In group one, Grant was emphatic where he denounced another State of Origin sports-chatter ritual, the debate about whether the rugby being played at the time, or the rugby league is better, “Every year... all week, all I’ve been hearing is how Origin is better. Rugby’s not boring man.” Grant is explicit in describing the perennial nature of sports-chatter about State of Origin. The timing of game is fixed and ends. Where Eco (1986) describes sports-chatter as a form of waste, he defines it as a by-product of sport that is confined to the sports event. However sports-chatter as an activity continues after the game as it moves on post-game analysis, or to the next event. When seen as its own activity, with its own language practices of banter, exchange, vernacular and debate, it should be understood as generating knowledge, social capital and building identity.

As discussed earlier, the growth of sport corresponds to increasing media attention. Similar to Eco’s sports-chatter, popular author Malcolm Gladwell (2016) coined the phrase, ‘second conversations in sport’ to describe the way narratives are used to connect and consume sports codes. There are conversations about what happens in terms of scores and events and plays on the field, and there may also be a second conversation, which puts the first in a much broader context. The follow-up discussions are parallel and perpendicular to the game itself. Examples include the interest in analysing Major League Baseball through analytics which involve interpreting data and statistics to predict performance and outcomes, immortalised in the film *Moneyball*. In the Australasian National Rugby League, the behaviour of players draws much media speculation and public attention. Although they do not contribute to what happens in a game, second conversations or sports-chatter capture attention through mediated discussion and public interest. Race and racism enters the

second conversations in rugby, although intermittently, in this way. Two controversial incidents occurred in 2010 and 2011 in the Super-Rugby arena in New Zealand. The stories, responses and subsequent editorials brought claims of racism to the public eye.

Mediated Story 1 – The Canterbury Crusaders’ ‘Darkies’ Quota

The back-story to the ‘darkies’ controversy involves an unfolding public conversation between three prominent figures in New Zealand rugby media. It began with the release of Chris Laidlaw’s third rugby book, *Somebody stole my game* (2010).

Laidlaw is a well-known New Zealander, a former All Black great, who has performed a number of duties as a public official. Included amongst these civic roles are: a term in Parliament as a Labour MP for the Wellington Central electorate; New Zealand’s first resident High Commissioner to Harare, Zimbabwe; an assistant to the Commonwealth secretary-general; and the Human Rights Commissioner and Race Relations Conciliator for New Zealand. At the time the book was released, he was a Council Member on the Wellington Regional Council.

Laidlaw is also a public commentator, hosting a national radio show, and a part-time newspaper columnist. His expertise is confirmed from his oft-cited tripartite credentials. As a former All-Black half-back, Rhodes Scholar and diplomat, Laidlaw is a rare mix. He has been an outspoken commentator on New Zealand society generally, and rugby specifically. For example, his 1973 autobiography *Mud in your eye* caused some controversy by directing a number of criticisms at the New Zealand Rugby Union (NZRU) and the state of rugby in New Zealand.

Laidlaw had previously ventured into the topic of race in New Zealand rugby. His comments were part of wider ruminations on the increased frequency of Pacific Island players in New Zealand rugby (Laidlaw, 1999). He has championed rugby’s qualities at improving race-relations. He also caused some sensation when he accused the 2002 All Black selectors of favouring Pākehā over Māori and Pacific Islander players (Laidlaw, 2002). ‘*Somebody stole my game*’ (Laidlaw, 2010) was a lament on the changing state of rugby, due to professionalism. Laidlaw’s polemic invokes the idea

that focus on rugby has become a heavily branded entertainment product, overshadowing the traditional notions of fan loyalty and social connectivity.

In one of the chapters '*Is brown the new black?*' Laidlaw focused on the phenomenon of the 'browning of the game', seeking to debate the 'pros' and 'cons' on behalf of a rugby viewing public. He skirts through well-rehearsed claims and national mythology, "the loss of international superiority based on the forbidding power of white farmers in the All Blacks forward pack has to some extent been compensated for, by the astonishing dynamism of Pasifika players..." (2010: 212) before making the racialised claim that "... it must be said that, simply because of that explosive energy, Pasifika players sometimes make themselves more vulnerable to missed tackles and because of all that instinctive brilliance, they sometimes just go their own way on attack, compromising a team's tactical plan" (2010: 213).

Finally his racial repartee asserts the necessity for a continued white presence on the playing field where he writes, "... Māori and Pacific Islanders tend to be more instinctive than measured in their approach and every team at the top level needs someone who can plot and plan, adjust and adapt. There will always be a place for a Grant Fox⁹ or a Conrad Smith¹⁰ and it is this ...variety that gives rugby its character." (2010: 213)

In 2010, Laidlaw was on the promotional circuit for his latest book. On a Sunday afternoon, May 23, he was interviewed by Murray Deaker on his national show on the Radio sport station. Deaker is a former club cricketer and rugby player. His role as a broadcaster, journalist and nation-wide sports talk host has made him an icon of New Zealand sport. He promotes himself as a conduit for reasonable thinking, an opponent of mediocrity and excessive politically-correct ways of thinking who is willing to ask the 'tough questions.' His image aligns with some 'blokey everyman' traits (Phillips, 1996), and his credentials are endorsed by the years of experience on the side-line.

⁹ Grant Fox is a former All Black great, playing first five eight in the 1980s for Auckland.

¹⁰ Conrad Smith is a former All Black great, playing centre, for Wellington from 2003-2015

A common theme on sport talkback radio is about how professionalism has ruined rugby in New Zealand. Much of the focus stemmed from the All Blacks inability to win the Rugby World Cup prior to 2011, despite having the best team in non-tournament years, the demise of egalitarianism in the professional ranks (Romanos, 1999), and the topic of white-flight, all of which Deaker has been outspoken on (Deaker, 1999).¹¹

The interview between Laidlaw and Deaker pivots between familiar examples of how rugby is in a downward spiral and a chapter in his book, *'Is brown the new black?'*

Deaker: I want to talk about this story in the book, because it's one of my favorites... [It] draws on this story of Laidlaw and an American friend going to watch a game between the Hurricanes¹² and the Crusaders play rugby. The American friend who has never seen rugby before says: *"How come the white guys in red are obviously so much smarter than the brown guys in yellow?"*¹³
[Laidlaw] *"We don't really talk about that here."*
[Friend] *"Really? It's all we talk about in the States."*

Deaker and Laidlaw talked further on the topic. Behind the allusion of the US visitor, Deaker clarified that the problem for him was that the teams he had traditionally supported had changed in their demographic make-up.

Deaker: I follow two teams, the ABs and the Blues. But I am having a difficult time following them because they don't reflect the community I live in.

¹¹ These issues relate to a transformation rugby in New Zealand that occurred concurrently, the first being the professionalization of New Zealand rugby and the increase of Polynesians in rugby. White flight relates to their being less Pākehā players in age-grade rugby due to the number of Polynesians, and their problematic body mass. This, alongside professional rugby, have been attributed to reasons why the All Blacks were unsuccessful in four successive Rugby World Cup tournaments (held every four years).

¹² Super Rugby franchise based in Wellington

¹³ The actual quote from the book is: *"I noticed that smart guys in red beat the dumb guys in yellow"* He had noticed, he said that one team, the Hurricanes, was predominantly Polynesian in complexion while the other, the Crusaders was overwhelmingly white. *"The two things are obviously connected," he observed.*" (Laidlaw, 2010: 214)

The discussion on race and rugby was given further air-time, with Andy Haden providing the language that would catalyse the ‘darkies’ controversy. Haden is a former All Black, and Auckland province player. His career began in the late 1970s and continued through the 1980s. He represented New Zealand in over 100 matches, as an imposing lock-forward. He was part of the renegade Cavaliers tour that unofficially played matches in South Africa in 1986. After retiring, Haden became one of the first rugby agents in the professional era.

On the evening of Wednesday 26 May 2010, Haden was part of the expert panel on Deaker’s television programme, *Deaker on Sport*. The panel was addressing the broad subject of problems with the Super Rugby competition. They turned to the Auckland Blues franchise. Haden lamented their poor form, and lack of success. Moving from the issue of the Blues, Haden found the solution in the form of the Canterbury Crusaders, specifically, their recruitment policies: “Once they’ve recruited three, that’s it. That’s their ceiling. Three darkies... no more,” said Haden. “In the Crusaders manual, there it is, it’s enshrined in their articles, and they’ve stuck by that. And they know damn well that that’s the case. And it’s worked.”

The news cycle (newspapers, radio talkback, television news) became saturated by responses from the Prime Minister, the CEO of the NZRU, the Canterbury Crusaders franchise Chief Executive Officer, Coach, and members of the Cantabrian public. Many of the responses denied the claims made by Haden, and were aggrieved by the language and the claim that racism existed in rugby, let alone New Zealand rugby. There were few comments that engaged with his claim, and the media space accused Haden of being racist due to his language. Many story spaces were filled with online polls questioning whether Haden should have been appointed a Rugby World Cup ambassador, and whether he should be removed from the role. Haden revised his quote over the next few days by stating the comment was in reference to Pasifika recruits and not Māori. Haden never recanted and the ‘darkies’ comment was dismissed before its veracity could be challenged. The broader issues of institutional and cultural racism that is informed by the same race logic as abuse were not

addressed. Where Haden had claimed that the Crusaders had a racial policy, he became the racist.

Mediated Story 2 – The problem of ‘Too Many Darkies’ in the Auckland Blues

The second incident occurred in Auckland, where the Super Rugby franchise the Blues having languished in mediocrity over a number of years. The performance of the Blues is a favourite subject of New Zealand sports journalists. The Blues last won the Super Rugby competition in 2003, and as of 2015, only appeared in the playoffs twice since their last tournament win.

Pat Lam, a former All Black and Manu Samoa representative, was appointed coach of the Blues in 2009. During his four-year tenure as coach the franchise only made the playoffs once, in 2011. The poor performance of the team attracted a lot of public criticism. Part of the criticism targeted the Samoan ethnicity of the coach, and the numbers of Pacific Island and Māori players in the team who accounted for 22 of the 29 first choice players. In a press conference in April, 2012, Lam spoke out against the criticism, bringing attention to the racial taunting he and the team had been subjected to:

Lam: It's sad really, it really is. We totally accept the criticism that we get when we don't perform. But it's the racist people, the social media and talkback, where people say things that are pretty offensive. The question about the racial stuff is what I'm upset about. It's just sad that we live in a country that has that, but it's just a minority and I know that... It's different when it's a racial thing. The emotion is about my parents... For me it's a job. I'm enjoying the job and I enjoy the fact that as a team we come together and are working hard to get out of this adversity. When I think about my parents and the tough times they went through to be the people they are that's what I am, that's what I'm working to do with this team.

During his address Lam started to cry when talking about his parents, before gathering himself, apologising and continuing. Journalist, Richard Boock (2012), responded to the incident in an opinion piece, reporting that it encapsulated long-held public views

about the ethnic composition of the Auckland Blues.

A month later news outlets reported that Lam had received a racist text message from the phone of a former Auckland coach, Mark Anscombe. His son Gareth was playing for the Blues and had been dropped from the starting side earlier in the season due to a poor performance. The text was reported to have said, "Gareth would be playing a lot better if he didn't have niggers playing outside him." Anscombe denied he had authored the text:

Anscombe: It certainly wasn't me. Someone played a joke. I had a group of people here, my phone is always in the kitchen and someone sent something, which I quickly jumped onto. It was an embarrassing situation. Someone thought they were playing a prank over a few beers. Obviously, I didn't see the humour in it. I texted Pat immediately.

Lam did not respond to the story, "I honestly have no comment, that's it from me." The chief executive of the Blues, Andy Dalton, also preferred not to comment, saying "it's just another external distraction the team doesn't need".

As these two episodes played out publically, they confirm race issues exist in New Zealand rugby. As debates, they provide ambivalent or varied ways of reading the issues. There are shared threads of how race and racism are debated in rugby media. These stories are markers of an on-going mediated dialogue about how the ethnic make-up of rugby in New Zealand is changing, and how race is used to understand, describe and respond to ongoing multiculturalism. The tension within the stories is antagonistic to the way rugby union has been described as a culturally unifying space. 'Browning' as a verb and a phenomenon frames rugby, especially mediated-rugby as a white space. For something to 'brown', it must not have been 'brown' previously. Grainger et al. (2011) writes why 'browning' is a problem for many commentators as a form of postcolonial anxiety that attempts to re-anchor whiteness or white masculinity as central to the national imaginary through rugby. The mediated-stories use constructed descriptions of Māori, Pasifika and Pākehā as different 'races', who contribute different qualities to rugby. They contain coded language and aspects of

“positive” racism, where Māori and Pasifika men are seen as ‘natural’ sportsmen (Hokowhitu, 2004) and the on-going contribution that Pākehā males can make. Boock encapsulates the problem as “too much flashy Islander stuff. Not enough Anglo Saxon-type yeomen” (2012: 14). The criticism of the Blues, extends the ‘darkies’ narrative by racialising rugby success and failure. The commentators use race based logic to justify protecting rugby from encroaching multicultural change, stabilising it as white. As mediated-debates, the two stories provide the space to discuss race.

Further Examples

In the process of developing this research project I experienced further examples of race. The first occurred at a junior-rugby club game on a brisk Christchurch Saturday morning in 2011. I was part of the side-line spectators to support my god-son. He played for a local east-Christchurch club. His team was ethnically diverse, comprising of Māori, Pākehā and Pacific Island children. Their opposition was a reputable Christchurch private intermediate school team, and much less ethnically diverse. The competition was weight-grade rather than age with the children on both teams evenly sized. The school team were given a hard time in the first half. Knowing the children in the club team as I did, I was aware of the exposure to sport and practice both official and unofficial they went through. Playing touch in the summer taught them ball skills and running lines, playing league had taught them defence, and playing rugby with mates was fun. My god-son was small, skinny, and had already dotted down for two tries.

It was the half-time speech from the opposition team that caused some reflection. “They may be bigger than us, and faster than us. But we are smarter than them” (pointing to his head for emphasis). Of course, here was a coach that was looking to inspire his team, who were losing badly. But here was a coach discreetly recycling racial tropes. The school team proceeded to lose the second half.

The second local incident came a few months after the club versus school game. This time, it was reported in a local newspaper, possibly due to the timing of the impending 2011 Rugby World Cup. The incident came from comments on the

computer site Facebook. Again the paradigm of winning and losing is essential to the context. It followed the national high school boys' rugby championship, where the Christchurch team lost to a South Auckland School team comprised of mainly Pasifika boys. The article reported that a Christchurch high school student, posted racist comments on two public Facebook pages. They amounted to comments about Pasifika rugby players being good for their brawn and not their brains, and pejoratives about brown people being stupid, on social welfare and becoming pregnant at high school.¹⁴

Racial incidents continue to occur in rugby with some regularity, and continue to attract media attention. These examples include racial abuse from a spectator at the Christchurch club premier final¹⁵, abuse from high school students¹⁶ and ordinary fans,¹⁷ against Māori commentators,¹⁸ remarks aimed at a broadcaster¹⁹, between players,²⁰ amongst referees and coaches²¹ and in the institutional sector of rugby associations and New Zealand sport media.²² It is becoming more difficult to claim that an example of racism is a one-off incident.

The persistence of these types of incidents contributed to informing my research agenda. Here, I return to sports-chatter as a framing device. Star (1988) engages with Eco's description of sports discourse as sports-chatter. She outlines how sports-chatter operates across sport as an activity and product: at the level of sport itself, that is the discourse of players and coaches; at the level of the discourses of the spectator and audience watching sports; the discourse of 'mediated sport' or media discussions of

¹⁴ "They claimed most brown people were stupid, on a benefit and had children while still at high school. 'Nigs can't think. They are shit at rugby after school because club footy requires more than just being big and black and being fully developed at the age of 15.'"

http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10755954

¹⁵ <http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/70643222/canterbury-rugby-officials-meet-lincoln-university-club-over-racist-abuse>

¹⁶ http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10755954

¹⁷ <http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/mid-canterbury-selwyn/68968072/Kate-McMillan-Rugby-racism-unacceptable>

¹⁸ <http://www.stuff.co.nz/sport/rugby/5716747/Waaka-I-m-going-back-home-to-my-people>

¹⁹ <http://www.stuff.co.nz/sport/other-sports/5098270/Broadcaster-Murray-Deakers-nigger-slur>

²⁰ Parahi, C. (Reporter). (2008, October 25). TV3 News: Sports Report Report [Television]. Retrieved from <http://www.scoop.co.nz>

²¹ <http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/10185066/For-the-love-the-game-Div-3-rugby>

²² <http://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10289/5147/thesis.pdf?sequence=3>

sport; and discourse on discourse, when the audience, players or media discuss mediated sport. Star's description of sports-chatter is useful for this research where the participants occupy and shift through these positions, as fans and consumers of rugby, as they engage with the mediated debates as fans of rugby, and also as they draw from their experiences as players.

Sports-chatter is an important area to explore race. Race and racism infiltrate across sport through the same discursive domains that Star (1988) describes. Carrington (2011) states that sports-chatter is an important source of information for critical analysis. He writes that there has been a gap between work at "the nexus between critical, sociologically informed work and the broader forms of mass media sports-chatter" (2011: 8).

This research foregrounds the sports-media complex by using mediated rugby debates and rugby players' responses to/readings of media representations of rugby, including the two mediated stories discussed above. These two mediated debates are evidence of race being a part of the 'second conversations' in New Zealand super rugby. The mediated debates focus on consequences of the influence of browning in New Zealand rugby. I use the two mediated stories to provide a catalyst for discussion, and provide the participants to talk about/reflect on race and racism in NZ rugby.

Chapter Breakdown

Chapter two reviews the relevant literature. There is a relatively small pool of research on racism and sport in New Zealand, and as such the thesis also draws from the wider international literature. I locate the research within the field of critical sociology of race and sport, using Critical Race Theory alongside other critical analysis. I expand on the focus of media-sport, and the significance of moving from textual analysis of race in media-sport, to how players/fans engage with and make sense of mediated debates, drawing on their own perspectives and experiences to read and interpret race and racism.

Chapter three discusses the use of focus groups as a strategy for gaining insights into rugby players' responses to the mediated debates (above) and how these are informed by their own perspectives and experiences of rugby and potentially racism in rugby. I consider recruitment strategies, focus group processes and the analytic approach I employed.

Chapter four presents the thematic analysis from the participants' talk about race and racism. The first theme involved how the participants negotiated the presence of race in the mediated stories, with a focus on how participants negotiated race in the Haden 'darkies' story. In the second theme I identified where the participants reproduced racial discourse through the network of racial terms and ideas used in rugby. For the third theme, I focused on the stories experiences that the participants disclosed in the focus groups about experiencing race abuse in rugby. Theme four identifies where the participants challenged ideas about race and racial terms. The four themes developed from the way the participants navigated the mediated stories.

Chapter five concludes this analysis with discussion of the data. The discussion presents findings from the four themes, examining the tensions present within the talk about race in rugby from rugby enthusiasts, further analysis considers how social location of the participants informs their talk. An assessment of the research methodology and future research pathways are presented.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Race, racism and sport

This chapter provides an overview of literature and theorising at the intersection of race, racism and sport. In order to explore the issue of race in New Zealand rugby, it is important to consider what has been written on race and sport. In particular, I engage with the critical sociology of race and sport. This is a term that Carrington (2013) uses to refer to the whole body of literature, with its origins spanning over 50 years, attending to the issue of race and sport. There are multiple branches, and this chapter presents some of the foundational works that reflect broader approaches and shifts in the study of race and sport. I pay closer attention the relevant studies that examine race and racism within the sports-media context, making clear the methodological range and theoretical influences that these studies incorporate. I also expand more thoroughly on the approaches of Critical Race Theory in sport approaches to racialisation and sport.

I locate this project within critical theories that attend to the relationships between culture, power and social relations (Coakley, 2009). Sport is framed as a social construction, influenced by power relations, narratives and discourse (Coakley, 2009). This focus seek to produce research that views sport as a site for the reproduction and (potential) transformation of culture (Hall, 1992). There has been significant growth in the literature devoted to understanding sport and race. Overtime it has grown more complex and nuanced as understandings of race have developed. This body of 50 years of critical studies deals with the representation, portrayal and invention of the black athlete.

Sport is a meaningful site to study race. Hartmann states that “there is little doubt that sport is one of the most powerful and important institutions in the production, legitimation and (at least potentially) contestation of contemporary racial formations” (2012: 1007). He argues that the significance of the sociological study of race and sport stems from three central elements. The first is the cultural popularity of sport. Sports boast international events that are passionately followed by world audiences.

The largest is the Federation International de Football Association World Cup. The 2010 tournament, held in South Africa, boasted a cumulative television audience reach of over 3.2 billion people through 64 matches. A second element is the prominence and proficiency of people of colour in sports. Accomplishment in sports for ethnic and racial minorities has offered some recognition and opportunity for social mobility or mainstream societal success. The last element is that based on theoretical principles of equality which emphasise the virtues of even competition, meritocracy and fair play. Hartmann describes these as being parallel to liberal democratic visions of social justice and cross-cultural understanding (2003: 60-92).

Beyond a boundary

The black Caribbean philosopher and revolutionary figure C.L.R. James is a remarkable literary pioneer on sport. He wrote what many consider to be the most important book on sport, over 50 years ago, *Beyond a boundary* (Stoddart, 2006; St. Louis, 2007; Hartmann, 2010). Most critical studies of race and sport trace some descent from James, and *Beyond a boundary* is only becoming more relevant as new scholarship familiarises and engages its many depths.

Beyond a boundary is a semi-autobiographic memoir that explores the social significance of cricket in the Caribbean. James accomplishes numerous contributions to the way we can think about sport. The book sprawls James experience and knowledge to interconnect cricket, race and class divisions. He claims cricket as a political and cultural space in itself, rather than a reflection of politics and culture. He champions cricket as worthy of the time and attention it received in the public imagination. James challenges Leon Trotsky's view that sport was a diversion from "real" politics (1963: 153), "arguing instead that aesthetics and politics were embodied in the very playing and stylized performance of cricket" (Carrington, 2013: 382). Throughout the book, he expounds on cricket's techniques, skills, team dynamics and the psychological warfare between bowler and batter.

As a social commentary, the book identifies cricket as a challenge to imperial rule, and a part of the wider anti-colonial push in the West Indies at the time. As Carrington (2013) explains, "James reads cricket as a space in and through which the

classed and racialized antagonisms of the Caribbean are played out” (p.141). The value of cricket as a competitive sport, along with its proclaimed Victorian virtue of fair play and the gentleman’s code of sporting behaviour, became a vehicle for promoting West Indian self-determination and ultimately national independence. This was further achieved when the team met the British, standing as equals, on the playing field and besting them at their own game (Beckles & Stoddard 1995, Carrington 1998). James led a vocal campaign to end the period of white Test captaincy. The appointment of Frank Worrell as the first black captain in 1960 was an important symbolic act for West Indians, breaking the vestige of colonial limits of leadership.

Writing about West Indies cricket was a reclamation project for James. He recovers Caribbean cricketers from the exotic ether of “colonialist axiologies of English cricket discourse” (Bateman, 2013: 2). Where English sports writers ‘othered’ Caribbean cricketers, James locates them in time and place: “Constantine’s leg-glance from outside the off-stump to long-leg was a classical stroke. It was not due to his marvellous West Indian eyes and marvellous West Indian wrists. It was due, if you must have it, to his marvellous West Indian brains” (1963: 134). Bateman (2009) uses this passage to point out how James understood the way in which English discourse reproduced a colonial value system based upon a racist mind/body binary. James’ essay on Garfield Sobers subverts English commentaries descriptions. He writes, “Garfield Sobers, I shall show, is a West Indian cricketer, not merely a cricketer from the West Indies. He is the most typical West Indies cricketer that it is possible” and “to misunderstand Sobers is to misunderstand the West Indies [because] his command of the rising ball in the drive, his close fielding and his hurling himself into his fast bowling are a living embodiment of centuries of a tortured history” (James, 1977: 213). As Lazarus concludes: “It is an index of achievement of James’s writing on cricket that he is able, in an entirely compelling way and in a single passage, to cover all the ground between the exceptionality of genius and the typicality of national culture” (1995: 108).

One lens that James employs to understand cricket, is how he traces sports relation to the hierarchies of colonialism and colour. He viewed cricket as fitting the needs of an emergent West Indian society, with the self-discipline apparent in the sport also a

necessary ingredient in struggle for freedom and equality. West Indians were not only victims of imperialism but had agency to seize the tools of the oppressor and use them for self-determination. James understood cricket as a meaningful site of self-determination

‘Stacking’ and racial stereotypes

The next generation of scholarship sought to demonstrate the presence of race in sport primarily by measuring it. Investigations in to ‘stacking’ or ‘positional segregation’ became a prominent test for racial stereotypes (Lavoie, 1989; Maguire, 1988; Melnick, 1988). Positional segregation is a test of team sports that predicts white players will be over-represented in key thinking or central positions and ‘coloured’ players will be over-represented in the periphery or speed positions. Stacking as a practice is evident across a number of sporting codes, and more persistent and profound in some sports such as the white quarterback in American Football.

In the New Zealand context Melnick (1996a; 1996b) tested stacking in both rugby and netball with regards to whether Māori occupied central positions. He found that there was some underrepresentation in both codes, however he deemed it statistically insignificant. The two studies, and a number of the conclusions made about the inappropriateness of testing race, have generally become redundant as new approaches to understanding sport have developed. Positional play in some sports has become less fixed, and due also to demographic change in both codes since the time of the study. However the ideas that they were testing for remain persistent. Lewis’ (2010) response to the ‘darkies’ story highlights this when he argues that there has never (at that time) been a Pacific Island first five for the All Blacks.

Stacking provided an initial useful type of investigation as a measurable practice that highlighted race. Similar studies highlighted employment discrimination within professional male sports with black men, for example, the study that found black coaches were more likely to be fired earlier than white coaches (Frey & Eitzen 1991: 513–16). Another of the earlier critical studies on racism in sport focused on commentary within live sport broadcasts. Rainville and McCormick (1977) produced a study on the portrayal of race in the sports media. They measured race as covert

prejudice in broadcasts of nationally televised National Football League games in the United States. Rainville was a blind psychologist, who was able to identify the race of players by what the commentators said without the race of the player being mentioned. They calculated how white players were more frequently discussed than the black counterparts and how black and white players were described in different ways. These studies used statistical differences to make sense of racism. During this period a number of social-histories on black, or indigenous, athletes and issues were also published (Curtis & Loy, 1978; Hallinan, 1991; Tatz, 1987; Thompson, 1964).

These works indicate some of the ways in which stereotypes and race logic is evident in the codification of black and white athletes, whether spoken/written discourse (sports commentaries) or in practice (stacking). The limits of these studies were recognised by Susan Birrell (1989), who challenged the field of race and sport to embrace more theoretically driven ways of researching race and sport and to attend to questions of race, gender, and class.

Racialisation in sport-media

Media representations are understood to be central in constructing and reproducing race logic. A number of analyses on sports-commentary and race (Bruce, 2004; Byrd & Utsler, 2007; Eastman and Billings, 2001; Murrell and Curtis, 1994; Van Sterkenburg, Knoppers, and De Leeuw, 2014), outline how sport is racialised through media. The studies offer insight into the use of hegemonic discourses of race in sport and present nuanced investigations of race, language, practice and power within the context of sport. Research into sport-media has consolidated how it constructs athletes depending on their racial or ethnic background (Eastman and Billings, 2001; van Sterkenburg, Knoppers, and De Leeuw, 2014). Within sports commentary, players who are racially identified as 'white' are more frequently viewed as thinkers, and framed as leaders. When white athletes are critiqued it tends to be for lacking athleticism and physical talents. Their abilities are produced through hard-work and dedication. In contrast athletes of colour (for example African-American, Māori, Pacific, Aboriginal) are more likely to be described as predominantly physical, to the detriment of intellectual attributes. They are more likely to be criticised for mental

errors and lack of concentration. However, they benefit from natural physical talent and are able to react instinctively in games.

St Louis (2005) describes the distinctions between white and black athletes as reiterating the Cartesian mind/body split dualism.²³ He argues that sport, given its physical and mental attributes, plays out a totalising logic separating races as either physically capable or cerebral. The mind is rational, logical and in control of the body, but ultimately not physical. The body is the location of desire, regressive and instinctual. This dualism is hierarchical, producing a binary of civilisation with primitivism.

The sum of the range of these studies is a taxonomy of black racialised athletic performance within different forms of media-sport. Bruce (2004) suggests that sport commentators on television draw on a reservoir phrases that include racial stereotypes when they describe sport performance. Due to time pressure associated to their work, they may routinely (re)produce these types of widely circulated racialised discourses in their commentaries. Azzarito and Harrison (2003) describe how the descriptions of black physical talent are stubborn as both white and black players repeat stereotypes.²⁴ Several studies reinforce that racialised athletic performance is taken as a type of 'positive' race logic, in spite of fixing black athletes in to a limiting corporeality (Benson, 2000; Singer, 2005).

Broader questions have been asked that reflect a more critical stance within race theory. This includes examining how race intersects with other social identities and inequalities (Messner et al. 2000, Smith & Beal 2007), and thinking more critically about whiteness (Hylton, 2010). Billings and Eastman (2002) looked at the intersections of gender, ethnicity and nationalism in Olympic coverage. Media representation of sport-stars and sport-celebrities have also been conducted, including studies on Ian Wright and John Barnes (Carrington, 2002), Venus and Serena

²³ Cartesian dualism derives from French philosopher Renes Descartes, and his famous premise *Cogito Ergo Sum* translated as *I think therefore I am*. The dualism relates to the material body being distinct to the immaterial mind.

²⁴ The stereotype of the Black physical athlete is reproduced by both white commentators and black commentators

Williams (Douglas, 2005), Kobe Bryant (Leonard & King, 2011), Michael Jordan (Agyemang, 2012) and Zinedine Zidane (Rowe, 2010).

A second body of work attends to sport as a productive cultural activity and social institution that makes and remakes ideas about race, and not just or only a domain that is impacted by racist discourses and ideologies. Back, Crabbe and Solomos' (1999) research into British football hooliganism details why thinking about race in sport from a narrow perspective is problematic. They focussed on shapes and locations in which racism may be expressed. They challenged earlier works that focused on the demonstrative excesses of spectator violence that has attempted to address race in football, but reduced the problem to racist incidents from a small anti-social 'hooligan' fan group. This ignores the larger infrastructure that the incidents emerge in, and silences other forms of racism. They argue that football racism should be considered a characteristic of wider football culture. The research responds by providing an analytic framework that facilitates a categorisation of football culture into four domains. The domains are 'the occupational', 'the institutional', 'the vernacular' and 'the culture industry'.

The four domains represent different areas from within the sport culture. In brief, 'the occupational' domain concentrates on the forms of race thinking and racism players experience at their clubs. 'The institutional' domain involves the broader structures of a particular code such as administration, management and governing institutions. The 'vernacular' domain refers to talking about sport and includes fan cultures. Back et al. (1999) describe 'the vernacular' domain as deriving generally from fan culture including the negative form of abuse and chanting from fans. Within the context of European football, it also includes rivalries and clashes that develop out of the distinct territorialised club identities, and the interactions of their supporters on game days which is known within the English literature as 'neighbourhood nationalism' (Long, 2000). The 'cultural industry' domain refers to how race is represented across a range of media. The act of categorising race and racism in rugby into the four domains, is an act of mapping where they occur. While there are overlaps and similarities with the intent and expressions of race within the four domains, this framework provides a structure for a broad analysis of racism in rugby as it allows for discussion about race

from both institutional and demotic arenas (Back et al., 1999). This is a useful analytic framework that responds to Hylton's (2009) challenge to situate the processes of racialisation in sport within specific national, class and gendered contexts. Back et al. (1999) argue that overt or instantly recognisable racist acts should be seen as part of a wider 'racialised' culture of soccer, or any sporting code. They write "that overt and instantly recognizable 'racist' acts can no longer be taken as shorthand to classify a person as belonging to a deviant group of soccer fans that is characterized by moral degeneration (that is, 'racist/hooligans')" (1999: 45). They pursue the idea that racism in a specific sport must take account of the cultural context where racist acts become meaningful expressions. The cultural context of racism is reinforced by the contingent processes of everyday practices of racialisation. Back et al. (1999) provide a range of examples such as jokes amongst players, micro-aggressions with coaching staff, differential racist expectations on the training grounds or the formation of mono-ethnic sub-groups of players within mixed clubs or teams. These practices reproduce racialised discourse, and provide the pattern for more overt racial behaviour.

A benefit of placing the practice of racialisation across the culture of a sport highlights the paradoxical and contradictory expressions of race in sport: "Racialization implies a set of differentially racialized cultural contexts it also constitutes a move away from the common assumption that such a context is formed by a single, coherent racist ideology" (Müller, 1999: 46). Back et al., (1999) use the example that white soccer fans simultaneously racially abuse black players of the opposite team whilst supporting those on their own team.

Theories of race in sport

The last fifteen years has seen an increase of sport-based research that has theorised race and ethnicity in the postcolonial era (Carrington, 2001, 2010; Coakley, 2009; Hartmann, 2003, 2012; Hylton 2009, 2010; St. Louis, 2003). This research has developed via multiple disciplinary paths including critical theory, cultural studies, media studies, race studies, post-colonialism, post-structuralism, critical race theory and kaupapa Māori research. These post-positivist approaches share similarities of critical engagement that interrogate and challenge racialised thinking in sport. In

Race, sport and politics (2010), Carrington reflects on theories of racism and the diaspora of the black athlete, and the changing nature of race within sport. For example, he describes the boxing victories of black Jack Johnson in 1908 over Max Baer as signalling the beginning of the black athletic superiority. Before him, and his boxing exploits, black athletic ability was seen to be inferior to white athletic superiority. Through sporting examples in the 20th century the language of sporting ability reversed to black athletes. Carrington argues that the categories of 'blackness' and 'whiteness' "have changed as a result of their co-articulations with each other" (2010: 20).

Hylton (2005) has emphasised the use of Critical Race Theory (CRT) as being useful tool in understanding race and racism in sport. CRT is acknowledged as a theoretical framework to explore the intersection of power, culture, nation and race. CRT has been used as way to view leisure and sport, as the focus is on voicing alternative accounts that challenge orthodox perspectives. The production of counter-narratives is important within the context of sports to critique the dominant discourse of the 'even playing field.' CRT emerged from the United States as a response to the problem of the 'colour line' (DuBois, 1903). It was developed by African-American scholars to address civil rights issues and as an alternative to Critical Legal Studies (Crenshaw, 1995). Founded as a critique of the contradictions of liberalism to the cause of social justice, CRT has an explicit focus on racism and the changing significance of race.

Hylton (2005, 2009) advocates for the use of CRT as an ontological starting point for the study of sport. He writes, "A CRT lens turned upon the mainstream writing of sport and leisure studies throws light upon a domain that traditionally reflects the power and knowledge interests of white social science" (2005: 85). Fundamental to CRT is the notion that racism is socially constructed. However CRT is not universally agreed upon with a developed intellectual architecture (Delgado, 2006). Rather, its structure is made up of basic tenets which confront the varied and amorphous applications of racism. Hylton's (2005, 2009) CRT agenda is described in five central tenets, as outlined by Solorzano and Yosso (2001). In brief, the first tenet is positioning 'race' and racism as central to one's analysis, while recognizing connections with other forms of discrimination and oppression such as gender and

class. The second tenet is that CRT eschews liberal notions of meritocracy, objectivity, colour-blindness, and equal opportunity. CRT scholars seek to expose how denial of racism reproduces a system of white privilege (Glover, 2007). The third tenet is CRT's commitment to social justice, which incorporates an agenda of liberation and transformation. The fourth tenet is the use of narratives from marginalized voices, opening space for informed discussion. The fifth element is the transdisciplinary nature of CRT, utilising a broad ambit of investigation. These five tenets have a latticed effect of challenging how racism produces particular subjectivities.

Critical Race Theory's focus on social justice can help sports organizations develop better antiracist policies. The development of a broader transnational, global, and diasporic (as opposed to merely national) framework has allowed scholars to consider how ideas about race travel and circulate within a postcolonial globalised system (Carrington, 2010; 2013). Coram's (2007a, 2007b) investigation of race formations of Aboriginals in Australian sport, advances the view that CRT needs to be reworked to fit an indigenous context. The five precepts provide a guiding structure and maintain the rationale that racism is endemic in society. However, indigenous theorists in the United States have developed CRT to address their specific needs and situations. Brayboy (2005), and Castagno and Lee (2007) adjusted the main principles to recognise that for indigenous people, colonisation, rather than racism, is endemic to society. Racism is an abiding practice that has informed, and shaped the production of the colonisation process. Memmi (1968) writes that racism becomes a rationale for an already existing or contemplated oppression. Yet, in indigenous contexts racism is not often discussed. This becomes fundamental to understanding the use of racism and indigenous peoples. The language and discourses used in this context differ from the black-white context. The language of antiracism and resistance are often asserted as indigenous rights, or in the Māori context, Treaty of Waitangi²⁵ rights. While being cautious of employing a theory that has derived in a black-white contest to an

²⁵ The Treaty of Waitangi is a treaty of cessation that was signed on February 6 1840 as an agreement between Māori and the British Crown. It is a foundational document, and recognised as having established a partnership between Māori and the Crown

indigenous context, this framework puts the racialisation of indigenous peoples at the forefront. It allows for racism to be discussed in a context where it has been absent.

Race and rugby in New Zealand

Māori have a social history of both engaging with and resisting dominant western hegemony through sport. New Zealand's national narrative includes the claim that sport is a positive and progressive racial force, where Māori not only perform on an even playing field, but outperform the wider community. Sport, specifically rugby, is often touted for its ability to promote racial harmony. The lack of sport barriers has been used as a statement of exemplary race relations. Rugby is seen as an integral part of a masculine, nationalising identity for both Māori and Pākehā (Phillips, 1995). As Laidlaw typifies:

Rugby was born out of the warrior spirit. That is why it instantly appealed to Māori. Differences between the races have always been put aside for sport, and for rugby in particular. It has been a healing force of greatly underestimated importance over the years when ethnic tensions have run high. It is a fascinating point of convergence for Māori, Pākehā and Pacific Islander; one of the few real bridges between each of the cultures. The romance, the legends, the folklore of the great matches and the great players is not a Pākehā monopoly. It belongs to all. There is probably no more eloquent expression of multiculturalism at work (1999:22).

Within the national team, the All Blacks, the historical contribution of Māori players has been used as a barometer of equality in New Zealand. One example comes from the political rhetoric around 'Māori privilege'. Don Brash's²⁶ infamous Orewa Speech (2004), for example, exposed an undercurrent of anti-Māori rights sentiment. His agenda was to remove context from Māori access to public rights, dismissing how colonisation marginalised Māori, and disregarding claims to social justice. In defence of Māori being over-represented in negative health statistics, Brash stated, "Nobody

²⁶ Don Brash is a former New Zealand politician and, then, leader of the second largest political party. The Orewa speech targeted ethnicity as an electoral issue, specifically by appealing to votes who disagreed with policies aimed at protecting special Māori rights. (Brash, 2004). See Dominc O'Sullivan's (2008) article Needs, Rights and "One Law for All for more.

would suggest that because there are relatively few European New Zealanders in the All Blacks, there has been a breach of the Treaty” (Berry, 2006).

Critical literature by Hokowhitu (2003a, 2003b, 2004, 2007), MacLean (2000, 2005), Palmer (2006a, 2006b, 2007) and Ryan (1993, 2005) have problematised Māori participation in New Zealand sport, disrupting the idea that sport was only beneficial for Māori. Hokowhitu and Palmer view sport as implicated in the instigation and maintenance of colonial structures of power and reproduction of racial stereotypes and hierarchies. Hokowhitu (2003a, 2004) argues that the ‘natural talent’ label attributed to Māori and Pasifika players in New Zealand derives from the colonial power structures between British colonisers and the indigenous Māori population. Palmer (2007) argues that sport commentators and elite coaches in New Zealand produce these ideas where they comment that Māori and Pasifika athletes have natural flair and ability, but lack the discipline and stamina of Pākehā/White players. The most overt examples of racism have been made in sport-media forums, for example:

“Tuffey is a Māori and, traditionally, not many Māori make good cricketers because they don’t have the patience or the temperament to play through a whole day, leave alone over a Test match.”²⁷

Hokowhitu is the preeminent critical writer of Māori in sport. His oeuvre makes significant contributions to Māori scholarship. He examines historical and sociological understandings of Māori in sport. Although he attends to critical issues of Māori masculinity, he does not avoid issues of race. His research has deconstructed the idea of the ‘naturalness’ of Māori men playing rugby, and provides a genealogy of ideas that contribute to the stereotypes that Māori and Pasifika men are ‘physical as opposed to intelligent’ (Hokowhitu, 2003a, 2003b).

Hokowhitu’s thesis (2001) and further work (2004) traces the genealogy of these discourses, exposing how colonisation subjugated Māori men. He uses a post-structuralist approach to deconstruct the recorded literature of early European writers.

27 Comments made by former Black Cap captain Martin Crowe, January 17, 2003. Wisden Cricket Website, column.

Some of the descriptions that were used to ‘other’ Māori include lazy, natural and hyper-masculine discourses. He describes how these works embraced the importance and utility of the civilising mission by demonstrating how Māori were benefitted by European and especially British sports. The New Zealand colonial experience was attached to the global colonial ideology of muscular Christianity²⁸ as a civilising project. Hokowhitu (2004, 2008) describes sport as a historically a colonial tool, and states that success in sport served three functions. Firstly, it was an area where Māori could achieve public success without challenging the mainstream. Secondly, sporting attributes let stereotypes of ‘savage’ Māori endure. Māori physical abilities are highlighted, obscuring intellectual abilities. This results in “a physical/intellectual dichotomy that would limit Māori throughout colonial history.” (Hokowhitu, 2003a:194). Lastly, it served the colonial machine by evidencing success of colonisation at having enlightened and assimilated ‘natives’.

Hokowhitu has also explored how Māori are involved in reifying the colonial system. He writes that “...early Māori rugby stood for tino rangatiratanga, mana and Māori nationalism, but its entrenchment within New Zealand rugby’s dominant discourse meant the respect given to Māori masculinity through rugby was only for a hybrid-masculinity of the dominant group” (2005: 90). Racialised discourses partially compliment Māori men as they view the rugby field and other physical areas as ‘their’ space. The inverse is where sport is seen as an appropriate outlet or alternative to the potential of Māori criminality or where Māori youth prefer pursuing sports at the expense of educational endeavours. He challenges this limitation of internalising physical, rather than intellectual, “I am irritated by the continued perception of Māori as either sports stars or criminals. ... Conceptualising Māori and Pacific peoples as ‘practical’ or ‘physical’ will ultimately limit their potential.” (2008: 81). This reflection is a critique on the bind of Cartesian dualism, as the either/or manichean choice of mind/body persists. Dualism exists where sport or education are alternative choices. Part of James’ (1963) intellectual development came through cricket, and as Carrington (2010) writes, Aime Césaire and Frantz Fanon played football too.

²⁸ Muscular Christianity was a philosophical movement with origins in middle 19 century England, with a commitment to health, patriotism and manliness.

Hokowhitu (2009) attends to these ideas in his work on Indigenous existentialism, where he discusses a stimulating framework for examining the lived experience of being indigenous.

Grainger is another writer who discusses New Zealand rugby, with a focus on Pacific Island inclusion. He captures the displacement of Pākehā male rugby players by the transition or browning of New Zealand rugby. The ‘browning of rugby’ demonstrates that the domain must first be white in order to be ‘browned’. Presenting ‘browning’ as a problem further exemplifies the problematic belief surrounding race in rugby.

Grainger et al. (2011) describes the response as the anxiety of white rugby in NZ, expressed through the problematisation of Polyesian New Zealand rugby through such issues as weight grades. These concerns are gently expressed by white commentators:

I think it is fantastic that we have this wonderfully athletic group of people that can help us develop our sport ... But I also want the hard, tough white farmer to be a part of my All Black side ... The type of player who is there for 80 minutes in a ruthless uncompromising way (quoted in Matheson, 2001: 32).

Hippolite is a further academic engaging with Māori communities with racism in sport. In particular she focuses on the experiences of Māori athletes, volunteers and coaches and management, discussing issues of the silence of race in New Zealand sport. She highlights the ‘power differentials in society’ and how these repress the ability of Māori to practice cultural values in Pākehā dominated contexts (Hippolite, 2010: 2). Hippolite and Bruce (2010) advance the concept of silence in relation to Māori community experiences of racism in sport. They argue that the national narrative of New Zealand being an exemplar of good race relations, the on-going pervasiveness of white privilege and the common belief that sport is a positive racial force has meant Māori experiences of racism are not acknowledged.

Using media to research race

There is extensive body of research that examines the way sport-media reproduces dominant racial ideologies. A large amount of this research is produced through content analysis of sports-media texts and coverage. While issues of race and racism

in sport-media remain a growing area of research, there is less research about the ways those narratives are interpreted by sport participants and audience. Millington and Wilson argue, although textual analysis is important, it “lacks nuance” (2010: 31). In other words, textual or content analyses do not account for the meanings produced by sport participants and consumers.

One research approach to address the subject involves audience research. A small number of audience research studies have been conducted in sport. These studies demonstrate the same disposition that asserts the need for reception studies. The limitation to research on content analysis is that an assumption that audiences are passive, and internalise the dominant messages produced by media (Jhally, 1989; Sorice, 2009). These studies describe media texts as polysemic, that is they are capable of producing multiple readings depending on the experiences of the audience (Davis & Michelle, 2011; Suckfull & Scharkow, 2009).

Some studies have utilised developments from the broader audience reception literature. For example, some investigate the intersections between media constructions and “real” experiences. Bruce’s (1998) project on female viewers’ understandings and frustrations of televised men’s basketball used cultural studies-informed, ethnographically oriented research, theorising how audiences make meaning (1998: 375). She outlines the ways audiences potentially resist “disempowering” messages and argues that media messages—especially those deemed disempowering—“cannot be understood from analyzing the text alone” (1998: 389).

A series of studies from Brian Wilson and co-authors exemplify the approach. These works develop critical and reflexive discussions regarding methodological protocol, and involve developments in reception studies. The 1996 article examines how youth audiences make sense of athletic-apparel commercials (Wilson & Sparks, 1996). Their study aims to “address the impacts of athletic footwear commercials and celebrity black athletes on youth culture by describing the reactions of racially distinct youth audiences to these commercials” (Wilson & Sparks, 1996: 409). The research was conducted with seven small group interviews with young males. Interview

discussions focused on the youths' perceptions of athletic apparel commercials that feature celebrity and non-celebrity African-American athletes; athletic apparel as a form of stylistic expression in the different peer groups at the interviewees' schools; and the young people's views on both images of race in media and race relations in broader "everyday" experiences. These conversations were stimulated by a video "trigger"—a series of athletic apparel commercials that were shown to the groups at the beginning of the interview session. Ultimately, the impetus for this work was to better understand how social position in school influenced the opinions that youth audiences form about sport-related media.

The body of research into audience understandings of race in sport is smaller again. Each of these works note the dearth of literature in this field. In many respects, the call to reception studies encompasses the recognition of previous research about race in sport from textual analysis which repeat the claims of black athletic superiority and mental inferiority. For example Eastman and Billings state that "sports announcing ... messages are repeated hundreds of times ... This means that the conceptual frames adopted by announcers readily get transferred to many fans" (2001:185). Conclusions based on texts can only be considered conjectural.

The extent to which audiences, particularly those members of specific ethnic groups, "reject, negotiate or may be complicit in maintaining hegemonic discourse has received relatively little attention from researchers" (Van Sterkenberg and Knoppers, 2004: 305; Wilson, 1997; Wilson and Sparks, 1996). Wilson and Sparks (1996) study is one exception, where they focus on the interpretation of apparel commercials by both Black and White youth communities in Canada, Armstrong's (1999, 2000) and Bierman's (1990) similar studies of black youth in the U.S., and Van Sterkenburg and Knoppers' (2004) analysis of the discourses concerning race and sport used by White and Black students in the Netherlands. A second article from Van Sterkenberg (2015) discerns how different ethnic audiences consume messages about race and sport, with regards to nation during the Football World Cup. His findings show how different ethnic groups are influenced by race in the way they connect and negotiate their support for the Dutch football team.

Buffington and Fraley's (2008) research organised an audience to respond to in-game commentary. They used 10 statements from commentary during 2000 NCAA men's basketball championship where the commentators construct race through the commonly cited physical or mental skills; they also supplied images from the game and asked the respondent to match the images with the statement and explain why. They explored how participants held a belief that Blacks and White possessed different sporting abilities in a manner similar to the messages in sports media.

This research project is influenced by the literature in a number of ways. The pioneering studies in to 'stacking' and constructions of race demonstrate the origins and persistence of race logic in sport. Back et al. (1999) caution taking a narrow view of race and sport, and outline the way race circulates through domains of sport. The findings and direction of these studies are reflected in the development of Critical Race Theory as a useful tool to study race and sport. By drawing from the works produced in New Zealand, and positioning race and racism at the centre of this study, I use CRT to explore how it is produced and challenged in rugby.

My project is informed by recent media-sport research approaches, through the use of integrating media texts in to the study. The purpose of mediated-debates is to act as a catalyst for talk around the topic of race and racism in sport. A focus is whether mediated representations of race and racism are circulated between rugby players and sport-media. I am interested the positions that the participants take in the mediated-debates, how they negotiate the focus group talk and the ways participants construct identities through group talk as people involved with rugby and consumers of sport and sport media texts.

Chapter Three: Methodology - research design and methods

Research that considers how sports are discussed is recognised as an important way of exploring issues in qualitative research perspectives in sport (Wilson and Sparks, 1996; Buffington and Fraley, 2008; Millington and Wilson, 2010). Mediated debates and public awareness devoted to issues of race and racism in New Zealand rugby provide a context to this research. The aim of this research was to explore how club rugby players talk in regards to these issues, using mediated debates to facilitate discussion. The stories, experiences and understandings they drew on demonstrate how race and identity is actively negotiated in every day contexts and through talking about race and racism. Focus groups were selected as the most appropriate research strategy to encourage discussion. Participants were recruited from local Christchurch rugby clubs. Four news clips that covered the 'darkies' and the Blues stories were shown to the participants to discuss the stories and explore how they made sense of them. This chapter presents and provides a description and justification for using focus groups as the research method. Data collection, ethical considerations and analytic method are also outlined.

Focus Groups

As method for collecting data, focus groups are useful when researchers seek to explore participants' meanings and ways of understanding. They are a dynamic way to explore how groups of people discuss an issue/topic. Morgan (1997: 2) states that the outstanding feature of focus groups is the social dynamic of group interactions, as a way of generating data and insights that may not occur outside of the group. The benefit of smaller groups is that provide for room for individuals to talk and allow opportunities for discussion and responses (Berry & Shelton, 1999; Lunt & Livingstone, 1996). "One respondent's remarks tend to stimulate others to pursue lines of thinking that might not have been elicited in a situation involving just one individual" (Wimmer and Dominick, 2011: 134). Interaction with others then potentially facilitates detailed information. For example, focus group discussions can allow participants to contest what has been said, which encourages participants to

clarify what they have said (Morgan, 1996). Additionally, individuals may reposition themselves in relation to the ideas being circulated, potentially in contradictory ways.

Focus groups can allow for individuals to be less inhibited than in individual interviews. This is useful when discussing issues such as race and rugby due to the controversial nature of racism. Kitzinger argues, the focus group method can be successful in such research contexts, connecting with difficult-to-reach individuals: 'Not only does safety in numbers make some people more likely to consent to participate in the research in the first place ... but being with other people who share similar experiences encourages participants to express, clarify or even develop particular perspectives' (1994: 112).

Focus groups also have limitations. While focus groups have potential to gain in-depth information (Kitzinger, 1995), the group dynamic can be influential. Some participants may try to dominate group conversation and silence voices and opinions of members who may disagree with what is being said (Kitzinger, 2005; Smithson, 2000). Silence may also be used as a strategy to disagree with what is being said. Sim writes "the absence in diversity of data does not reliably indicate an underlying consensus" (1998: 348). An experienced facilitator can help to involve quiet participants by using prompts and inviting participants' thoughts.

Focus groups have been used with consumer to explore how public discourse is formed and to understand interpretive communities (Lunt & Livingstone, 1996). Interpretive communities contribute to how audiences are defined and analysed (Barbatsis 2005: 286). An interpretive community is a group of people with shared cultural codes and social experiences (Fish, 1980). Interpretive communities producing meaning as a social process, which is continually negotiated, and involves the audience becoming 'authors' of the text. Interpretive strategies circulate amongst the interpretive community to produce meaning. Radway's (1984) research on romance readers called attention to the connection between 'social location', such as gender and class. For her, the group is primarily collective rather than taxonomic, where the process of forming opinion and discourse occurs.

Sport research has tended towards favouring fans as an interpretive community for focus group research (Gantz and Wenner, 1991; Real and Mechikoff, 1992). A recent reception study (Wilson and Millington, 2010) in sport encourages approaches that move beyond an audience of fans, but rather to involve communities engaged within physical culture. They advocate for designing research that incorporates and encourages participants to draw from their experiences.

I chose to use focus groups to facilitate research in to how rugby players actively discuss race and how they constitute particular identities through interaction with others (Kitzinger, 1994: 104). Through this strategy, attention is given to the processes the participants use to talk about race and racism, drawing on their own experiences (Pirkey, 2009: 49). Focus groups have the potential to facilitate personal experiences and to stimulate discussion through participants' interaction with each other (Kitzinger, 1994: 105).

Identifying media

I used mediated-debates about race in rugby as a research strategy to facilitate discussion in the context of the focus groups. An important task for this research was to identify specific media for the participant to explore. In reception studies, researchers have often focused on a specific media type, for example Buffington and Fraley (2008) used televised commentary of games to examine race, Kane and Maxwell (2011) used pictures to investigate representations of women in sports, and participants for Wheaton and Beal (2003) read magazines about surfing in their study on sporting sub-cultures. These and further studies highlight a scope of media used such as in-game commentary, print media articles, blogs or other types of media for a reception study on race. As I was interested in understandings about race and racism I choose to focus on specific media stories. Indeed Hylton (2010) and others advance the idea that race and racial differences are normalised in sport-media, though signifiers, and other subtle ways. I prioritised mediated stories that included debates and discussions about racism, using the recent racism controversies that had occurred in New Zealand rugby (discussed in chapter).

I identified two television news stories for each of the two events for the focus groups. The clips for both of the news stories included the re-broadcast edited versions of the events of the stories, as well as a follow-up and some discussion from commentators responding to the incidents. These clips were the mediated news stories, broadcast on the two main New Zealand news networks, TVNZ news and Channel 3 news. These stories were chosen as they represented the most common news sources, as judged by the size of the television audience. The four clips represented audio visual texts, but more importantly, the primary news broadcast. In this sense, I showed the most accessible media coverage in the focus groups. These stories were also recycled and rebroadcast online, either on the TV channel's website or Stuff.co.nz, a prominent NZ internet news platforms. Other website stories were also referred to.

The four clips contain a news story of the events as well as reactions from local and prominent stakeholders to the incidents. The first two clips focused on the stories following the Andy Haden incident. The first played on TVNZ. The story was broadcast on May 26 2010, and made available on the TVNZ website. The clip was 2 minutes and 49 seconds long, and included responses from CEO of Canterbury rugby, the NZ Prime Minister, as well as reactions from local Cantabrians that are being asked the opinion as to whether the claims are true. The second clip was broadcast by Channel 3 news, and was embedded in stories on stuff.co.nz as well other platforms. The 1 minutes and 13 second clip, re-aired the original footage of the statement and focused on what the response from the Rugby World Cup minister Murray McCully would be as to whether Haden should be removed as ambassador for the Rugby World Cup, and further provided some commentary that the Haden claims were supported from unnamed former Canterbury rugby players.

I chose to use two clips for the Pat Lam incidents. The first story aired on the 11th of April 2011, and was mostly footage of Pat Lam speaking at a press conference. The clip was 1 minutes and 40 seconds and aired his responses to the racial criticisms that he was receiving in response to the poor performance of the Auckland Blues. The second clip was broadcast on the TVNZ and was 5 minutes 40 seconds. The story was a revisiting of the incident, one month later. It reported the footage of Pat Lam responding to the text messages, as well as some commentary related to the owner of

the phone, denying that he sent the text. Longer investigations in to racism in New Zealand rugby followed including sit-down interviews with former Pasifika All Blacks.

Recruitment of focus group participants

The primary data for this research was collected from four semi-structured focus group interviews. Each of the groups consisted of four to six teammates from four different local Christchurch rugby clubs. Using teammates for the focus groups was deliberate. I assumed I would be dealing with rugby players who had differing experiences, understandings and engagements with mediated representations of race. The main criteria for the selection of participants was that they were playing club rugby, however I did privilege recruiting participants from a kaupapa Māori club in order to have Māori perspectives represented in the research.

A rationale for inviting teammates to take part in the focus group interviews was to draw from an interpretive community with pre-existing social-relationships. Using teammates enabled them to draw on their established social networks, and the potential for them to be comfortable with discussing potentially sensitive issues. As the participants played rugby, and grew up playing rugby, I framed them as an interpretive community for the mediated rugby stories, as I anticipated that they would follow and engage with rugby media. Local club players were thought to be more accessible than professional players. Finally, they would have a depth of experiences to draw from. I expected that this group would yield insights in to race and perhaps provide examples of racism in rugby. The participants were given time and space to make their contribution.

Researchers have described the benefits of using pre-existing groups (Kitzinger, 1994; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009; Peek & Fothergill, 2009; Pirkey, 2009). Kitzinger writes, “Above all it is useful to work with pre-existing groups because they provide one of the social contexts within which ideas are formed and decisions are made” (1994: 105). Pirkey highlights that focus groups who are comprised of pre-existing groups who share social networks (teammates, classmates, and friends) are more likely to engage with discussions on sensitive issues. Peek and Fothergill (2009) argue that in

comparing different focus group approaches they found that pre-existing groups generated insightful discussion that might not have occurred with group comprised of a random sample of participants.

Greenwood, Ellmers and Holley (2014) have written on the question of comparing responses from ethnic homogeneous or heterogeneous groups. They found that on issues related to ethnicity or race, groups will have different outlooks on the importance of ethnicity or race. Participants in ethnically homogenous groups were more likely to say that ethnicity or race is an issue in the context of the group discussion; they were more likely to make potentially controversial comments relating to ethnic differences; and they appeared to be more at ease with each other discussing the topic, mentioning ethnic differences earlier in these groups. Participants in ethnically heterogeneous groups were more likely to steer discussions away from race issues. Ultimately, they argue that data derived from homogenous groups complements data from heterogeneous groups, providing different perspectives (Greenwood, Ellmers and Holley, 2014: 13)

Four groups were selected to establish a sample that would provide adequate data to produce data for analysis in to themes. An upper limit of participants of eight per group was implemented to allow participants adequate space and time to talk in depth. The actual range of participants in each of the groups was between six and four.

For this research I invited one group comprised of solely Māori participants as there is a local rugby club that is a kaupapa Māori organisation²⁹ (described later). The three remaining groups were comprised of a mixture of ethnicities, as there are few ethnically homogenous club rugby teams. I hoped that the shared socio-cultural background of being teammates would be a way of operationalising the focus groups to discuss issues of race. Furthermore I was interested in examining the social dynamics of race through the discussion of issues of racism, such as how people view

²⁹ Kaupapa Māori organisations have developed through New Zealand. They can be defined as groups or organisations that adhere and operate according to sets of Māori principles or tikanga Māori for the benefit of the communities they serve. There is a wide range of organisations including health delivery services, urban authorities and other social groups.

the presence or absence of race in rugby (Wade, 2010). I decided to focus on male rugby players as my initial research proposed to study the intersection of race and masculinity in rugby, and also due to my belief that I would be able to draw from a wider pool of participants. Although this gave some parameters to my research focus, limiting selection was an imperceptive choice on my behalf as may have missed a potential dynamics with race and gender. In other criteria for selecting participants, I chose to use adult rugby players, with no restriction on ethnicity or playing experience – with an exception of the imperative that I included Māori and Pasifika in the research. The participants were given an information sheet and signed a consent form (see Appendices 2 and 3).

There were a number of stages involved for the data collection process. The stages included gaining ethics approval from the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee, recruiting the participants and conducting the focus group discussions. Before I began data collection I presented the project proposal to the Māori Research Advisory Group (MRAG) at the University of Canterbury (UC). As a Māori researcher I am informed by Kaupapa Māori Theory³⁰ (KMT), although I did not adhere solely to it for this project. Māori and Pasifika voices are central to this research. I hope that this thesis will contribute to discussions around race and racism towards Māori and Pasifika in rugby, as well as the way Māori and Pasifika read, understand and experience race and racism in rugby. These aims align with recurring themes in KMT research including focus on the analysis of unequal power structures and social inequality (Bishop and Glynn, 1999; Smith, L. 1999). In order to secure a Māori view I sought to involve a local rugby club that is an example of a kaupapa Māori sport club. In consultation with MRAG, we devised an appropriate plan of who and how to contact, as well as maintaining communication with the club after the period of data collection. Alongside support from MRAG, the project received approval from the UC Human Ethics Committee. The ethics application dealt with how focus groups and interviews would be undertaken in an ethical manner.

³⁰ Kaupapa Māori Theory refers to a Māori ontologically centred approach to research. Developed in the 1990s it has grown into a network of ideas and principles that challenges research to come from Māori perspectives, using cultural standards as ethics for the benefit of Māori communities.

I paid careful attention to ethical issues in my selection of participants. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) describe how issues of privacy and confidentiality are key concerns in qualitative studies which research sensitive issues, especially due to potential cross-cultural issues as a Māori researcher. I was sensitive to the fact that participants might have concerns with the use of information they provided regarding their rugby experiences. Confidentiality is an issue in focus groups. I asked participants to maintain confidentiality and not to discuss what happened in the focus groups, and that group conversations would not be mentioned in future discussions with their club.

It is with some solace that I read about how gaining entry to the research setting is often one of the most difficult phases of research. Writers such as Hammersley and Atkinson (1992) describe the process of trying to negotiate access as part of the research process of data collection, and that there are learning outcomes from the problems involved in making contact with people as well as from how they respond to the researcher's approaches (Atkinson, 1992: 56). The recruitment for the focus groups took two months from initial letter to the club, to the first group interview.

Rugby clubs are social organisations that have their own values and structures. I approached the clubs through an initial e-mail (Appendix 1) to introduce myself and my research, and ask for the opportunity to present my intended research at a monthly club meeting. I maintained that the clubs and players would be kept anonymous due to the discussion of sensitive issues. I e-mailed eight clubs, and followed up with phone calls to club secretaries. One club accepted my request to approach members of their team. It was difficult to tell whether the failure to make contact with the other seven clubs was due to the club, the project or whether my approach would have been unsuccessful regardless. It did become apparent that an unsolicited approach from a researcher was inappropriate and caused me to rethink my strategy.

I recalibrated and used existing networks to recruit members for the focus groups. I used my own networks to act as a 'gatekeeper' and introduce me to rugby clubs. Once I had gained consent from the clubs the 'gatekeepers' furthered sponsored me with introductions to teams. Fetterman writes, researchers 'benefit from a halo effect if they

are introduced by the right person' (1989: 44). With one club I attended rugby practices, and made up numbers³¹ in the training games. For a second club I attended practices as well as games. This assisted the process of recruiting participants, but was also a tenuous way of doing so as I had some on-going issues. On three occasions, I had no-one show at the arranged time, which led me to attend multiple team practices. I also had some of the teammates withdraw from the process through non-attendance. My own impression is that rather than being guarded and closed, as other researchers have stated (Harvey-Jordan & Long, 2001), I would describe their non-arrival with the Māori term of 'hōha' at being researched - that is the nuisance and commitment of time. I further acknowledge the role of 'gatekeepers' as aiding my research as they persisted with me in reorganising times and venues to hold the focus groups.

The makeup of the focus groups

Group 1

The first group comprised a group of teammates from a division 3³² men's rugby team. The group had five participants with a range of ethnic backgrounds: 3 Māori, 1 Pasifika and 1 Pākehā. Their ages ranged from 27-32. The focus group was held at the team's clubrooms.

The team remained a competitive side in their division. As an older team they viewed rugby as a social bonding experience and continuation of their passion for rugby. The group has a range of seven to eighteen years of playing experience. All the members had played age-grade representative rugby and for their high school team. Two of the members had only recently shifted from their club premier team, as well as two players who had semi-professional experience playing in Europe. Three of the participants were considering or already coaching at age-grade levels.

³¹ Participated in the practice

³² Local club rugby is divided in to grades. There are four open divisions, and two colt divisions in men's Canterbury rugby. Division 1 is the premier grade; the Colts grade features an age restriction, and is for players under 21. Division 2 is the next most competitive grade, with Division 3 following.

As group of friends, they had long established networks that involved attending primary school for three of them. Two of the players were long time club members, and their friendship was influential for the other three members joining the club in the last two years. It was through a friendship with two of the participants that I approached the club and gained access to the teammates.

Group 2

The second group were also teammates from a division 3 men's rugby team. The group was comprised of four participants, who all identified as Māori. Their ages ranged from 29-36. I conducted this focus group in a University teaching room. Their ages ranged from mid-twenties to mid-thirties. They had a range of rugby experiences: one member was part of a national high school championship winning team; one member had undertaken overseas rugby exchanges in his high school year; one participant is a member of prominent rugby playing whānau in Christchurch; and the fourth member stating that he played because his 'boys' (friends) played. The participants described similar social backgrounds where their families were influential in getting them in to rugby.

They were members of a distinct club within the Christchurch region as an example of kaupapa Māori sports-club. This was reflected upon by the participants where they forwarded their club values through what they described as whānaungatanga (the ethic of social relationships), with one of the teammates comparing it to his experiences where he felt isolated at other clubs.

Group 3

Group 3 were teammates from a division 2 men's rugby team. The group was comprised of four participants with a range of ethnic backgrounds: 1 Māori, 1 Pasifika, 1 Asian and 1 Pākehā. Their ages ranged from 27-36. The focus group was held at the team's clubrooms.

I did not get a detailed description of the rugby playing background of all the members, however one member had been a national rugby sevens³³ player. It was apparent that the team placed a premium on their current team, due to the amount of time and practice they committed. Their team was highly competitive in their competition grade. My connection to the teammates was that I had played against them in touch rugby.

In order to recruit this group I had to include a member who had recently left the club to join another team. This decision was purely geographical, but he encountered some teasing at the start of the interview. This group had a wider ethnic range, and some poignant moments with one of the participant's (Les) experiences of racism.

Group 4

Group four were mainly comprised of men's Colts rugby team, with six participants from a range of ethnic backgrounds: 2 Māori, 1 Pasifika and 3 Pākehā. As a Colts team the age range was younger than the other three groups, with ages ranging from 19-21 and one 32 year old. The older participant was a team trainer, and was my contact with the club. This group had a mix of geographic backgrounds, including Auckland, Hawkes Bay and South Canterbury. The focus group was held in a University teaching room.

Due to their age, Group 4s concentrated more on their player development and performance. They emphasised their current rugby playing careers, and they referenced performance pathways to their clubs premier team as being important to them. The interview was held four months after the first three interviews. This was reflected through some differences in the questions I asked them.

³³ Rugby 7s is a different format of rugby. 7 players take the field rather than 15, and the match consists of two 7 minute halves. It is a much faster game than rugby.

Conducting the focus groups

The first interviews were held during rugby season. The groups were audio recorded, with the length of the group interview varying from an hour to an hour and a half. The first three focus groups were conducted over a six week period between April and June in 2013. The fourth group was an exception, held over four months later in October 2013 after the first three groups due to difficulties in finding a group that wanted to be involved. The focus groups were transcribed verbatim, and sent to the participants for their review. All names were made anonymous through the use of pseudonyms, as were any names mentioned in the interviews. I kept a note book from the focus groups for my own records. These contained notes and observations of responses and novel themes raised by participants during the focus group discussions. I tried to capture observations of participants through their body language, such as where silent agreement was signalled by head nodding. I attempted to capture any visible signs of disagreement on themes of race, such as silence or disengagement from the group discussion.

Smith (1999) argues that research on Māori communities was historically conducted by white academics, and these communities have been problematised through research. This raises questions over the politics and methodological problems of researching groups and cultures to which researchers do not belong, including class, gender or race/ethnicity. Smithson (2000) suggests that participants' are potentially more inclined to disclose their thoughts with a facilitator of the same ethnicity. This is a cause of some complexity for me as I interviewed groups of Māori, Pasifika, Pākehā and Asian participants. A key question for me is, how does a researcher's social identity help or hinder them in the research processes and how should these be reflected in the research narrative? My position as a man, a pseudo-rugby player and fan positioned me as an insider in many ways. I have played sport to a relatively high level, I speak in the same cultural and sporting codes of Māori and Pacific Island vernacular culture, and I live in the same working-class background.

The interview session was structured so the questions progressed from general questions to more specific questions about race and ethnicity (see Appendix 4). The

timing of each of the group focus group discussion was such that there was an All Blacks, NRL or State of Origin match being played, or had just played. I used this as a convenient way of opening each focus group discussion, as it provided participants a chance to talk about sport in general, and was useful in establishing some rapport amongst the group. In the next part of the of the discussion I asked the participants to provide an introduction of themselves and their rugby background, which included how long they had played or what got them in to rugby. These questions allowed participants to give an introduction and share their background with the group, provided a space for each member to speak, and for me to get a sense of the participants.

The next part of the focus groups turned to the mediated-stories and clips. I screened the two clips about the Haden story first, and then asked a question about what the participants thought was happening in the story before screening the next set of stories about Pat Lam. In the focus group context, it offered the chance to expand on the relationship of race and ethnicity and the players' everyday experiences. I took interest specifically in the players' experiences of rugby, how they responded to the issue of race in the story, and the extent to which prevailing ideas about race inflect, are deflected by, or are reflected in their experiences on the field and in the club-room. The connection between playing rugby and media has been the subject of much theorising, but has largely escaped empirical inquiry (Buffinton and Fraley, 2008; Millington and Wilson, 2010).

As anticipated, the participants provided a range of responses and experiences. I used prompts to clarify participants' meanings especially as the participants used discreet rugby discourse. Questions were asked to gain more understanding of the responses, and to capture responses that were overtaken by the conversation as there were shifts in opinions through interacting with other participants. There were spontaneous statements within groups, and engaged responses across the groups. Most of the participants were interested in the topic. Group 2 differed in their willingness to engage with instances of racism, when compared with the other groups. Group 4, being held later, allowed me to review the data that I had already collected.

Thematic analysis

For this research I employed thematic analysis, a method of analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) where ‘themes’ or ‘categories’ are obtained from the data in order to obtain and organise a cohesive framework to convey findings. Thematic analysis can be applied across a range of theoretical and epistemological approaches, as it is positioned as independent of theory and epistemology. Braun and Clarke (2006) state that in doing qualitative research, the epistemological stance should be made clear. They provide a list of questions to be answered to provide full understanding and critique of the assumptions in using this method, and to assist future research to make further inquiry into similar topics.

I chose this form of analysis as there limited research exploring readings of mediated debates of race in rugby. Following the suggestions of Braun and Clarke (2006) in using a thematic analysis to communicate the data and the analytic work, I used the set of Critical Race Theory informed principles (discussed earlier) to look at the extracts, by positioning race and racism as central to the research focus. With a central tenet of CRT being that race is a social construction, I further employed this approach to examine the ways in which readings, navigations and meanings are produced and made sense of through the discourses and their social context. As a starting point, I began by closely looking at the participants talk for responses to race, and then how where they constructed or reproduced race discourse in rugby. The underlying epistemology is neither reductionist nor essentialist in that there is no attempt for a singular objective and universal truth. The focus is on the multiple subjectivities that are produced, and how these are made possible through participants talk.

A theme is understood as capturing something important about the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The themes are informed by the research question and represent patterned or meaningful responses within the data. I read the data closely for inductive themes and for themes I anticipated based on theories I had read. Deciding on what counted as a theme was a subjective process.

Analysis operated at the latent level, which involved interpretive work. In recognition of the coded language and the mutable nature of race (Carrington, 2010), the interpretive work involved explaining meanings associated with culture, race, rugby based sports-chatter and the race logic in rugby.

Steps of analysis

Braun and Clarke (2006) provide a six phase guide for thematic analysis. These steps are outlined as follows. The first phase involves becoming familiar with the data. I transcribed the interviews, reading and re-reading the data, and writing down ideas for potential codes. I used a note book during the focus groups, to record thoughts and ideas towards the process and outcome of the interviews.

The second phase is generating codes. Braun and Clarke (2006) describe codes as features of the data that are of interest to the researcher. It involves a broad assessment to an excerpt or section of data that connects with the research context. My initial coding phase involved looking for the interesting features in the data that related to racism, which included stories, frequent words and novel talk.

The objective of phase three involves searching for themes. Once the codes have been compiled, they must be sorted into main themes. This stage involves reviewing codes and devoting attention to identify patterns as well as differences. This stage was difficult as there was a number of potential configurations of codes in to groups. Challenges involved whether to organise the themes around the concept of race, and how the participants responses to race; or whether to map where race and racism occurred across the code of rugby in a similar vein to how Back et al. (1999) describe racism in football. This stage involved going back to the extracts and checking that the codes matched what the participants were saying. I organised the themes based on how the participants talked about race and racism. The first theme involved how the participants negotiated the presence of race in the mediated stories, with a focus on how participants negotiated race in the Haden 'darkies' story. In the second theme I identified where the participants reproduced racial discourse through the network of racial terms and ideas used in rugby. For the third theme, I focused on the stories experiences that the participants disclosed in the focus groups about experiencing race

abuse in rugby. Theme four identifies where the participants challenged ideas about race and racial terms.

Phase four is a further review of the themes. They may be split, discarded or collapsed into each other. The data is reread according to this thematic pattern and any codes or data that might have been missed are added into the scheme. During this stage I was also connecting the relevant literature to aid with analysis. For example, with respect to relevant literature on racialisation in rugby, I noted how many of these discourses were being reproduced by the participants in the focus groups.

In phase five, the names and definitions of themes are revised. Data associated with particular themes is interpreted according to what is interesting about it and why it is so. Themes are considered for their links to each other. The final phase is the production of the research. The data must be described and explained how it relates to the research focus.

This research aims to explore race and racism in rugby. Club rugby players are a significant population as they represent the grass-roots of rugby both as players and consumers of rugby. Attention is given to their readings of race and racism, as a means of investigating how they are understood, produced, challenged and experienced. The research strategy was to use focus groups as a way of gathering data from this group with a focus on their social interaction. The goal of screening the news stories was to act as a catalyst for discussion, where the participants could respond to the texts in order to encourage talk about race and racism in rugby. Their conversations incorporated reactions to the contents of the mediated stories, interpreting meanings of the stories, discussions about the value of the commentators who triggered the race controversies, as well experiences of racism the participants encountered. Thematic analysis was used to organise the data. Through their discussion they responded to the narratives in the mediate debates, and ‘interpreted’ the debates about race and racism in a ways that both reproduced the debates and challenged issues of race in rugby. The following chapter presents themes that were developed.

Chapter Four: reading race and racism

In this chapter I investigate the ways that race and racism is read, negotiated, challenged, and experienced by the club rugby players. The two mediated stories provided a catalyst for discussion, and an opportunity for the participants to talk about race and racism in New Zealand rugby.

Returning to sports-chatter as a framing device, Star's (1988) engagement with Eco's description of sports discourse as sports-chatter is useful. She outlines how sports-chatter operates across sport as an activity and product: at the level of sport itself, that is the discourse of players and coaches; at the level of the discourses of the spectator and audience watching sports; the discourse of 'mediated sport' or media discussions of sport; and discourse on discourse, when the audience, players or media discuss mediated sport. Star's description of sports-chatter is useful for this research, as the participants occupy and shift through these positions, as fans and consumers of rugby, as they engage with the mediated debates as fans of rugby, and also as they draw from their experiences as rugby players.

In this chapter I focus on the ways in which the participants 'do' sports-chatter – as players, fans and consumers of media discussions of sport. In particular, I attend to how race logic is both reproduced and challenged as participants responded to the mediated stories viewed in the focus group context and talked of their own experiences as players and fans.

The data drawn from the focus groups are organised into four thematic categories including: recognising race and racism in the mediated-debates, reproducing racialising discourse, narratives about experiencing abuse, and race in media-following practices. These are used to analyse how the participants talk about race and racism in rugby, and the racialising talk they produce.

Negotiating what constitutes racism in the mediated debates

The two mediated debates, the Andy Haden ‘darkies’ story and the Pat Lam racial abuse story, present contested ways to read race or racism. In this section I examine participants’ discussion around what constitutes racism in the mediated-debates. In the focus groups the first question to the participants following the clips was along the lines of ‘what do you think is happening in the story?’ The question was broad so as to allow a range of readings to the story. Across the groups, the first responses were about identifying racism in the Haden story. When answering ‘what do you think is happening in the story’ it was necessary for most participants to assign blame to the ‘three darkies no more’ claim. In this extract from Group 4, participants’ focus on Haden:

HK: ...to you guys, what is Haden talking about?

Stan (Māori, 32): I understand the story but I never really got what he was talking about.

Stewart (Pākehā, 20): Yeah, I didn’t agree with him. He was off or whatever.

HK: Okay, yeah. Can you explain why not?

Stewart: I think, you know, the Crusaders, they’ve had a lot of Māori and Islanders playing for them over the years. So I don’t know where those claims [pause] how they can be.

Stan: It’s definitely Haden you know. He said ‘the darkies’ or whatever.

HK: What do you guys think?

Rob (Pākehā, 20): I think that, what Stewart said. It was him throwing around insults to get a rise or whatever. Like, in that story, even when you’ve got John Key³⁴ to come in, saying it doesn’t happen in rugby.

HK: Yeah

Rob: Yeah, you know. We don’t... Like in rugby, it doesn’t really happen.

In this response, Group 4 refute the veracity of the ‘darkies’ claim (that the Crusaders have a quota of Māori and Pasifika in the team), citing the number of Māori and

³⁴ Former New Zealand Prime Minister, from 2008-2016

Pasifika players in the team. They identify the source of controversy as Haden, with Rob identifying Haden's language and describing it as act of incitement. He identifies John Key's statement that racism "doesn't happen in rugby." Hippolite (2010) states that New Zealand's supposed history of good race relations, and the positive contribution that sport is believed to make to racial equality have historically obscured the presence of racism in rugby. Rob repeats this denial of racism in rugby "We don't... like in rugby, it doesn't really happen."

The use of the term 'darkies' was the focus of discussion in Groups 1 and 3. In this extract, Dan (Group 1) reflects on the racial language Haden used:

HK: Is it clear what Haden, what he was talking about?

Dan (Pasifika, 28): It wasn't the best word to use.

HK: Saying 'darkies'?

Dan: 'Cause that's where he got himself in trouble. He could've said something else.

HK: Right.

Similarly, members of Group 3 described Haden's comments as unacceptable, with 'darkies' being the cause of the controversy. While recognising the controversial nature of the comments, they looked at the veracity of the claim and referred to the amount of Māori and Pacific Islanders in the Crusaders:

Richie (Pākehā, 29): Really, there's been plenty of Māoris [sic] in the Crusaders

Miles (Māori-Pākehā, 27): Norm Berryman³⁵

One of the participants referred to Haden's comments about rugby players and rape.³⁶

³⁵ The popular 'cult-figure' rugby player and Former All Black, Māori All Black and Canterbury Crusader, Norm Berryman

³⁶ On Murray Deaker's television programme, Haden commented on historic sex allegations against former All Black Robin Brooke, made by two unnamed women. "There's a bloke called Hugh Grant. He got into a bit of trouble like this and I think if the cheque bounces sometimes, they only realise that they've been raped, you know, sometimes... It's an equal society now, some of these girls are targeting rugby players and targeting sportsmen and they do so at their peril today, I think."

Niko (Pasifika, 30): He talked on some other shit though eh. Because they fired him afterwards?

HK: Yeah he did. He got fired.

Niko: What was it again?

HK: Well he said some stuff about rugby players, and rape. He said, he did a victim blame where...

Niko: So he's a shit-stirrer.

HK: Ok.

Miles: So, what was he playing at? He's trying to say that the Crusaders are a racist team, but he's the one throwing the racist words around. Is that me or is that a bit stupid?

Where Group 3 discussed Haden's claims, they dismissed them due to the presence of Māori in the team, and the further controversy that Haden caused with his comments about rugby players and rape. Miles recognises two forms of racism in the mediated-story, the accusation of a race based selection, and the racial language used, that is 'darkies'.

Group 2 considered the accuracy of whether the Crusaders have such a policy. They discussed the number of Māori and Pacific Islanders who play for the Crusaders in comparison to any other team:

HK: What about these Crusader 'darkies' comments. What do you all think about what Haden was talking about?

Hemi (Māori, 30): He's talking about that there are a lot less of us in the Crusaders.

HK: Right.

Neihana (Māori, 29): I mean, I guess it's something that's kind of, you know, it's common.

HK: Yeah?

Ryan (Māori, 34): It does ring true with the Crusaders, more than any other team. I'm always a Crusaders man through and through but, it is a noticeable compared to other teams.

HK: Can you explain that? Is there something to it?

Ryan: There is and there isn't you know. I mean how many bros are on the team? More than three for sure, but not so many more. They've always had a few brothers, but never been dominated by having heaps of Polys in the team.

HK: Right.

The response to the question 'what was Haden talking about?' pointed to the same framings as the other groups, but here they drew a different conclusion. Where the other groups reflected whether they thought his claims were true, Group 2 offered reasons why it was. Hemi recognises the assertion in the claim of the quota, and further places his own ethnicity within the discussion where he says 'us' in his statement, "He's talking about that there are a lot less of us in the Crusaders." Neihana describes the ethnic composition of the Crusaders, and acknowledges that the Crusaders have historically had less Māori and Pacific Islanders. In his view it is common rugby knowledge. Ryan agreed that it is noticeable that the Crusaders have less Māori and Pacific Islanders in their teams. He discussed whether the smaller numbers were significant or not, and acknowledged the general point Haden attempted to make about the quota while disagreeing with its precise number.

Most of the participants read the use of the term 'darkies' as the source of racism in the mediated-debate. Their discussion aligned with the narratives in the two news clips that were shown: Haden made the 'darkies' claim; an official such as the Crusaders CEO or the Prime Minister dismissed the claim; and a former Māori or Pasifika player discuss Haden's good qualities but disagrees with his statement. Essentially the mediated story frame the presence of race as whether the Crusaders have a racial quota as Haden claims, or if Haden is a racist for saying 'darkies'. The negotiations the participants made reflect some ambivalence to those two positions. Rob highlighted John Key's response in the mediated-story, and from his experience of playing with teammates of other ethnicities he states that racism, as described in the Haden story, 'does not happen.' Group 2 concluded that the Crusaders did have lower numbers of Māori and Pacific Islanders in the team, but this was not a conclusive indicator that the Crusaders have a racial quota.

Reproducing race discourse: Sports-chatter and racialised athletic performance

In this section I explore the ways in which racialised discourses are both reproduced and disrupted in the focus groups as participants discussed rugby/athletic performance. There were a number of instances in which the participants used physical qualities as ways of constructing differences between rugby players of various racial and ethnic backgrounds. Physical differences were identified as reasons why Māori and Pacific Islanders were ‘better’ at aspects of rugby than Pākehā New Zealanders, and vice-versa. As an example of constructing a race-formation, this type of sports-chatter has been termed ‘racialised athletic performance’ (Carrington, 2013).

Hylton (2009) describes the centrality of ‘physical’ terms and differences as being reasons for sport capability and success. ‘Physicality’ is an important and celebrated descriptor in rugby. In one way it is a desired trait that can be applied to rugby players, emphasising a development of the physical, and highlighting rugby as hyper-masculine. ‘Physicality’ is also significant in understanding the constitution of the Māori and Pacific Islander athlete as a racialising process. This process involves assigning a connected set of attributes that distinguish Māori and Pacific Islander rugby players from the normative position of Pākehā rugby players. The first is that they have an advantage of physical prowess. The second is that the physical advantage is a natural and inherent talent. Thirdly, their physical talent comes at the expense of intelligence. Hokowhitu (2001, 200) and Grainger (2009a; 2009b) have applied cultural analysis of how these are derived from colonial discourses, and continue to exercise hegemonic roles. Grainger writes, “The putative biological basis of racial athleticism has been absorbed by the popular media in such a way that theory and hypothesis have quickly turned into truism” (2009b: 49).

In the focus groups, participants used a range of markers that include geography, class and culture to signify differences and racial formation in rugby (Omi and Winant, 1994). For example, across the four groups the physical size of brown rugby bodies was a common point of discussion used to explain Māori and Pasifika success in rugby. Richie put it succinctly when he says “They’ve got bigger bodies” (Pākehā, 29.

Group 3). The ‘they’ Richie refers to are Māori and Pacific Islanders, and he makes the point to convey the idea of physical advantage that ‘they’ have in rugby. Dan made a tongue-in-cheek joke to convey a similar idea, specifically about Samoan rugby players, “It’s all the taro; it’s Samoan steroids” (Pasifika, 28. Group 1). This joke reifies physical difference. It has some currency in the way it is reproduced around rugby as a discreet form of normalising racial difference. This type of race logic naturalises Māori and Pacific Islanders physicality through biological determinism.

An extension of the logic of biological difference is that Māori and Pacific Islanders physically mature faster than Pākehā rugby players. This idea is echoed in Richie’s statement in the group discussion following the Pat Lam story, when the group talked about why the Auckland Blues were not winning as much:

Richie (Pākehā, 29): And it happens in the recruitment. What happens up in Auckland is that their boys are big when they’re young, and they can play hard and they hit hard. They have the natural ability, but in the long run that’s not learning to play the game.

Reflecting on the mediated-debates, Richie describes the problems facing Auckland rugby, repeating some of the same logic used in the Haden mediated story. The issue for Auckland is a result of recruiting from the large Pacific Island player pool. These explanations take on racial logic where issues of player development are explained as a type of determinism. Where their players shine at age-grade levels, the presumption is that they do not learn the necessary nuances and skills and this is evidenced in their failure. The focus of these descriptions becomes more about player ethnicity, than player ability.

These conversations were also repeated when participants reflected on their own experiences. In Group 4, Rob responded to the Pat Lam mediated story, by telling a story about playing rugby at high school. He described the challenge of playing against a predominantly Māori and Pacific Island rugby team at high school:

Rob: I remember playing against Aranui. And I swear almost all of them had full on bloody beards. And we were all these wee, white boys. The biggest lad on the team was, well, we called him Lofty. He got that name for a reason. (Rob, group 4)

This description does not mention Māori and Pacific Islanders explicitly. Instead it uses a particular school to communicate ideas relating to physical bodies. In the local Christchurch context, Aranui High has a distinct reputation. As well as having the highest demographic mix of Māori and Pacific Islander students, it also has the lowest decile rating in the region situated with the lowest socio-economic status (Tatz, 2012). Rob's comment draws on the idea of physical disadvantage and distinct racial differences. He contrasts the 'we' of his team as "white boys", of insignificant size versus a physically mature team who are able to grow beards. 'Lofty' is a nick-name given as a New Zealand colloquialism for 'uncoordinated'. Essentially, Rob is stating that the one player on the team who was physically large had limited skill.

The framing of a developed physicality for Māori and Pacific players also relies on a corresponding association with an under-developed mental ability (St Louis, 2005). Lagi, for example, endorses the idea that learning the game, rather than relying on natural ability, is fundamental to success:

Lagi (Pasifika, 21): But it's no good being able to dominate under 13s, you know scoring five tries a game if you're not learning how to run your tramlines.³⁷ Being big is only advantage for a little bit, fundamentals last. (Lagi, group 4)

Lagi reproduces racial logic in his argument against the different rates of physical maturation. Collectively, these statements racialise Māori and Pasifika bodies as having biological advantages of physical size. However the same logic is also used to discipline Māori and Pasifika bodies.

³⁷ Tramlines are an area of the rugby field

X-factor is a common term in sport that describes ambiguous characteristics. It is desirable, but is purposively difficult to describe as it refers to an immeasurable or ephemeral quality. It can mean unexpected success, or as a synonym for innate qualities such as flair (Palmer, 2006). It can include vision, movement and speed in a back³⁸; or a large player who runs fast, unencumbered by size; or a hard-working forward³⁹ who has a habit for scoring. Palmer (2006) describes how it racialises Māori and Pasifika, arguing that when this term is applied to Māori and Pacific Island players, it positions them as natural athletes using Social-Darwinist reasoning. Their talents are inherent, natural something they are ‘born with’. There are numerous examples of rugby writers and commentators describing it as ‘magic’⁴⁰. Success in sport is relegated as a pre-destined physical advantage, rather than a result of effort, work, practice and development.

The participants in group 3 used the x-factor to describe their team and consider what made them a successful team. They discussed having a committed group, where practices had high attendance. The second response was about having a mix of players. This mixture was about youth and experience and also players who do the ‘hard yards’ and ‘game-breakers’. This explanation evokes ideas around racial mix that are central to the Crusaders ‘darkies’ quota, where white players talked about the need for having the attributes of their Pasifika teammates:

Richie (Pākehā, 29): We’ve got a few game-breakers too.

HK: Yeah, is that, that the teams got some speed?

Richie: Nah, you know, I mean guys who can break the line, who have some of that x-factor

Miles (Māori, 27): We’ve always had a fair bit of pace but you gotta have a bit of danger players who can play. With Niko, he only just came over last year, him and his bro [name deleted]. They get us a lot of space. They can see gaps and get our boys running. It’s been good having them.

³⁸ Rugby position

³⁹ Rugby position

⁴⁰ http://m.nzherald.co.nz/rugby/news/article.cfm?c_id=80&objectid=11496232

The participants used terms like x-factor were applied to the Crusaders and the Blues, in response to the mediated-debates. Group 2 referred to x-factor in response to the mediated story about the Crusaders, and some of the particular elements that Haden discussed. Ryan claimed that the Crusaders did have Pasifika players in the make-up of the team:

Ryan: The Crusaders have always needed some boys with x-factor on the team. Canterbury, you know, in particular, they have a core to build around with Dan Carter and Richie and them. And when they add a Maitland.⁴¹

Hemi: or a Rico Gear.⁴²

Ryan: yeah, you want some boys with flair, who can make the game exciting.

Neihana: That's Sonny Bill!⁴³

In this conversation, x-factor is recognised as a necessary skill that contributes to both the performance of the team and the entertainment value. Again the terms infer racial difference. The three players that are referenced as having x-factor are Māori and Pasifika. The two Pākehā players are classified as core players. In rugby media these players fulfill the traditional rugby roles of hard-work (Richie McCaw⁴⁴) and strategic-direction (Dan Carter⁴⁵). Group 1 also used the term to describe the Auckland Blues strengths:.

Mike: They've [Auckland Blues] got powerful athletes.

Grant: I mentioned it to the boys the other day... they've always had plenty of x-factor.

Tahana: X-factor can win you a game, but it won't win you the competition.

⁴¹ Sean Maitland (winger, Māori) former Canterbury Crusader, and also plays for the national Scotland team

⁴² Rico Gear (winger and fullback, Māori) former Māori All Black great, Canterbury Crusader and All Black

⁴³ Sonny Bill (centre, Samoan) All Black and former Kiwi great

⁴⁴ http://www.nzherald.co.nz/sport/news/article.cfm?c_id=4&objectid=11493996

⁴⁵ <http://www.stuff.co.nz/sport/rugby/international/73472033/Wallabies-great-Stephen-Larkham-All-Black-Dan-Carter-is-rugbys-greatest-No-10>

X-factor is used as an explanation that restrains the potential of the Auckland Blues. This contrasts to the way that Group 2 used the term to describe its presence in the Crusaders. In order to achieve team success in rugby, x-factor must be accompanied by more interminable faculties. Where the Blues have too much, the Crusaders risk not having enough. Here x-factor is substitutes as a proxy description for the ethnic make-up of the two teams.

Expressions of how physicality can limit a team's success were also a topic of discussion. There were, for example, comments about styles of play through discipline and lack thereof:

Craig (group 2): When they're playing D [defense], they only care about making big hits. We do too, but we try and stay more disciplined.

Craig made this remark in a comparison of Auckland and Canterbury rugby styles. He went on to clarify that Auckland players might put themselves out of position in order to make a 'big hit'. The group talked further about discipline and recalled how in particular years the Auckland Warriors rugby league team was often criticised for their over-physicality, and inability to sustain a physical and mental performance through a full 80-minute game. These comments were repeated in other groups. Neihana (group 3) makes the following comment, in a self-assessment of his team. "Our big thing is making it through to 80 minutes."

In a similar way two other participants joked about the stereotype of Pacific Islanders not being reliable for a whole game, commenting on a common adage that has followed the Warriors as a rugby league team that has a high proportion of Māori and Pasifika players:

Miles (group 3): Nah, they usually putt out before that bro. 80 minutes man.

Niko: That's the Uso⁴⁶ game. We aren't built for marathons, we're sprinters.

⁴⁶ Uso is a Samoan word for sibling of the same gender.

The participants draw from a network of rugby-related terms, codes, descriptions of physicality, as well as other ideas that signify race and racial logic. Negative stereotypes associated with Pasifika players extend to poor discipline and difficulty to coach (Teaiwa and Mallon, 2005: 214). These rugby terms are part of sports-chatter, and circulate racialising discourse. Seen as a catalogue of statements about ‘physicality’ and associated traits, they are used to explain the game-play and athletic characteristics, and also success, of Māori and Pacific Islanders in rugby, reproducing the Andy Haden comments and criticisms of Pat Lam. Grainger (2009a) draws on Hall in the way stereotypes operate through a strategy of ‘splitting’ which “divides the normal and the acceptable from the abnormal and the unacceptable” (Hall, 1997: 258).

These statements indicate the racial logic that circulates in the New Zealand rugby context. Individual Māori and Pasifika are described through their physicality and are projected on to Auckland, becoming a brown space, and the Auckland Blues as a problematic team. Canterbury is positioned as diametrically opposed. Auckland rugby is described as having an opportunistic approach, targeting its large Pacific Islander community as a resource for its player base and reliance on intrinsic talent. Canterbury is contrasted as having a planned and principled approach, representing ideal player development through ‘learning to play’ and ‘fundamentals’. Whether Auckland rugby omits or employs player development strategies is irrelevant. It is ultimately doomed as its Pacific Island player base is racially flawed. Grainger (2011: 186) writes that these types of racialised descriptions derive from ideas of primitive physicality. These differences in individual, teams and space maintain the social and symbolic order, setting up a ‘symbolic frontier’ (Hall, 1997) which are reified in the successes of the Crusaders and the failure of the Blues.

This theme has analysed both the content generated by the focus group discussions and the public discourse within mediated-debates to assess whether ‘race logic’ is present in sports-chatter and analyse the implications of ‘race logic’ within New Zealand rugby narratives. My analysis demonstrates a consequential patterns pertaining to race logic in sports-chatter: (1) that ‘race logic’ is pervasive in the rugby context, normalised through discreet terms within sports-chatter and (2) that race logic

is rarely questioned or challenged within sports-chatter. I suggest that both these patterns result in 'race logic' being a self-perpetuating element of sports-chatter that, through its repetitive nature, has a significant impact on constructing racialised identities.

Encountering racial abuse in rugby

Racially charged language, racial abuse or vilification are highly visible forms of racism in sport. A number of participants talked about their experiences of being racially abused in rugby. The Haden mediated story and the racial criticism aimed at Pat Lam and the Blues mediated stories represent public examples of racism in rugby. The stories provided the opportunity to talk about issues of racial abuse in sport. Following the viewings of the both the Haden and Pat Lam mediated-stories, I asked 'whether that sort of language was common to them in rugby?' This question encouraged participants to reflect on their experiences.

There were a range of experiences across the groups. When Group 4 was asked if racist insults or names were common against their rugby team, the group did not recall many instances. As a follow-up, they were asked if 'darkies' was a common derogative in rugby, or whether they heard derogatory names for Māori and Pacific Islanders on the field:

HK: What about that word 'darkies'? Is that a common one that you hear?

Tipene (Māori, 19): nah that's more of a Paul Holmes⁴⁷ one, isn't it?

HK: Yeah, not one you typically hear.

Tipene: It doesn't hit hard. It's not like an insult that you'd get, well, too insulted by. I mean, because there are a lot worse than that.

HK: Well let me ask that then, what are the actual racial insults that do hit? [no answer] What are any race comments or names you might ever hear on a rugby field?

Lagi (Pasifika, 21): Any?

HK: Yeah, any name or example or anything

⁴⁷ The late sir Paul Holmes was a prominent media broadcaster. In September 2003, he repeatedly called then-United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan a 'cheeky darkie' on his radio show.

Lagi: Coconut [all laughing]
 HK: Yeah, cool. Jump in guys, it's just the names we've heard. Call them out, we'll try and see if we can roll out a few names.
 Stan (Māori, 32): FOBs. Horis.
 Troy (Pākehā, 19): Freshies
 Lagi: Eh, what you say? [feigns offense - all laughing]. Bungas.
 Tipene: That's probably the worst one because that's the one you hear if you get a penalty eh, 'fucking bungas' [all laughing]. That's how you know it's bad.

Although the participants did not initially give examples of being abused themselves, when prompted, the Māori and Pacific Island participants raised a number names. 'Freshy' and FOB (an acronym for 'Fresh of the Boat') refer to the contestable status of being a migrant as well as being naïve in non-Island settings. 'Coconut' and 'bunga' are both ethnic slurs for Pasifika peoples. 'Hori' is a derogatory term for Māori, and refers to a set of behaviour such as being lazy, jocular, in poor condition or broken. The level of offence varies in time and context, demonstrated through the participants' interplay when describing racial abuse. When Troy (Pākehā) offered a racial insult, Lagi acted offended. Many of the names generated laughter, diffusing the social awkwardness and sensitiveness through humour (Culbertson and Agee, 2007: 83)

Group 1 also provided a list of racial insults, names and included the sardonic use of being called 'bro' by Pākehā. They also discussed bad pronunciation:

Tahana (Māori, 31): I got it. The worst one for me anyway is being called a Mawry [emphasises poor pronunciation], like "you Mawrys... you Mawry boys need to watch it today..." [all laughing]
 Mike (Māori, 29): When there's that extra twang in it.
 Tahana: Eh. Like I can handle Mari, but Mawry...
 Pete (Māori, 29): It's where they go out of their way to pronounce it as badly as you can.
 Tahana: Yeah. I know that's not really racial abuse.

The conversation went on to discuss particular examples.

Tahana: One of the guys in our team is called Arana. And in the club he gets called A-rah-na [no rolled 'r'], or even A-runner. When I first heard that one, I didn't know who they were talking about [all laughing]. But why I say it is, I heard him answer the phone like "Hey, this is A-rah-na." You know, he was doing it like that and I was like "bro?" you know I was surprised, so I hit him up about it eh. I said "Why are you saying it like that?" And he said to me "I just get tired of it eh. Like I have to give a whole history lesson every time I tell them my name."

Mike: True bro.

Tahana: He kind of, he admitted it was lazy or whatever. But I reckon it was about business for him. Because he had a lot of [Pākehā] clients, he didn't want to make them feel uncomfortable by correcting them, so it would just make things easier and have them say...

HK: Awh that's out of it. So he was doing it to be polite.

Tahana: Yeah, exactly.

Pronunciation, or at least poor pronunciation has attained greater significance as the number of Māori and Pacific Island players has continued to grow in the Super Rugby competition.⁴⁸ There have been calls by players and families for them names to be pronounced correctly by commentators who are almost always Pākehā. Teaiwa and Mallon write: "Just as names are conspicuous markers of culture or ethnicity, getting people's names wrong is a conspicuous marker of ambivalence" (2005: 214-215). Pete reflects on this idea where he suspects the pronunciation is deliberately poor. Tahana's description of his teammate demonstrates a type of cross-cultural fatigue and awkwardness around the pronunciation of teammate's own name, such that it is modified to the extent modifies the pronunciation to be acceptable in cross-cultural exchanges.

⁴⁸ <http://www.radionz.co.nz/news/national/303947/complaint-at-sports-commentators-'racist'-pronunciation>

Two of the participants from Group 3 also offered examples of racial insults. Niko made a brief contribution:

Niko (Pasifika, 30): The one we got was Catholic Coon College.⁴⁹ That was a pretty good one.

Les recalled his experience of being racially abused:

HK: All good bro, tell the whole story. What happened?

Les (Asian, 28): Yeah, my one started off in a fight. So this guy was running at me, and must've thought he was going to go straight through me but I wrapped him up and put him down. Then one of the loosies⁵⁰ goes over him and we get the penalty. When he gets up he's swearing and trying to push me, and our loosie is still there, so I pushed him back and tell him to shut up or something like that. And he's talking a bunch of shit and then calls me a "fucking gook" which really pisses me off. Some of their boys had come over, you know, they were ready for a scrap.

Richie (Pākehā, 29): Awh yeah I remember that one. You were pissed off.

Les: Yeah, but then one of their guys says "oi don't be racist, dick" and tells him off. So at the end of the game, the guy who called me 'gook' is apologising, yeah.

HK: Does that happen much?

Les: I've been playing since I was seven, so yeah a few times, maybe five or six times. More when I was in high school than playing club.

HK: Wow, that's a lot.

Les: Yeah, it's only in rugby. I played league for three seasons, and basketball too. And no one ever called me 'gook' or 'nip' or anything.

HK: When this happened, do you accept the apology?

Les: Kinda

HK: Yeah. Right.

⁴⁹ Catholic Cathedral College is a Christchurch based high school. The school has a Māori and Pasifika population of 21%, which is twice the size of the ethnic composition of Christchurch

⁵⁰ Loosie is short for loose forward, a rugby position

Richie: When his teammates pulled him up, [that] was different. But we would've been happy to educate him.

Les: Yeah, that's it. You get so mad, that an apology doesn't really make up for it.

Research that considers anti-Asian racism in New Zealand states that it is a significant issue in frequency and severity (Harris et al., 2012), however there is paucity of this research in a sports context. Les describes it in some detail when he reflects on the impact of racial abuse. During Les' talk of his experience he makes a jarring juxtaposition where he describes and demonstrates the emotional impact of the racial abuse, against the matter-of-fact way he details the frequency with which he had been the target of abuse in rugby.

The participants from Group 2 addressed the subject of racial abuse with a range of examples, and some in-depth discussion through their focus group. While other groups gave examples of racial abuse, Group 2 was unique in that every participant contributed their own story. The group's discussion exhibits a number of interlinked memories and common experiences:

Craig (Māori, 36): I use to love playing against some of those schools, like [Christ College]. You expected to be called every name under the sun, and they never failed my expectations. It made beating them all that much more satisfying, beating them physically and on the scoreboard. Some guys never learn.

Craig attended Aranui High School. There is a dense social-history that deserves its own research project, however, in brief, Christchurch high schools are a prominent identity marker. As well as having the highest demographic mix of Māori and Pacific Islander students amongst secondary schools in Christchurch, Aranui also has the lowest decile⁵¹ rating in the region situated with the lowest socio-economic status

⁵¹ System used by the New Zealand Ministry of Education that indicates the socio-economic status of the area the school is located. A high decile rating indicates a

(Tatz, 2012). In the late 1990s, Aranui challenged the orthodox school structure when they developed the first sports academy in Christchurch. Always a powerhouse in rugby league, they won the rugby title in 1998 which upset the traditional rugby hierarchy in Christchurch. It is in this context that Craig talks about travelling to schools such as Christ's College⁵² for rugby matches, and being abused. Craig discloses the context and frequency of racial abuse in rugby, without exposing the insults.⁵³

Craig's talk about 'every name under the sun' prompted Hemi to share his story of being racially abused during a rugby game in high school by an opposition player in the middle of a game. Hemi describes his uncertainty around whether he had heard the other player correctly, and also how he should react to it:

Hemi (Māori, 30): Yeah, I got called nigger.

HK: What? What happened?

Hemi: Do I say who we were playing?

HK: Nah, you don't have to. Maybe just tell the story of what happened...

Hemi: We were playing this team, and they're a good team, eh.

HK: Right

Hemi: I get tackled. I get hit, and then I'm down in the ruck. And I'm trying to lay the ball out eh. And this fulla is on it. So I'm getting up and he says something like "I got you nigger."

And I'm "What?"

"I put you on your back, nigger."

[inaudible]

Hemi: He had his mouth guard in, so I wasn't sure about you know. But he said it a second time.

⁵² Christ's College is a private Christchurch based high school.

⁵³ Craig's experience during his school years is described as a common and expected behaviour. Instances of racial abuse in high school have become more serious and are at least two instances have been reported on through an extended news cycle. <http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/85309076/christs-college-rugby-players-racist-remarks-considered-topend-but-no-further-punishment>

Craig (Māori, 36): Shit.

Ryan (Māori, 34): Did you go after him?

Hemi: Honest bro, I didn't do anything. I was more like "what did he say?"

Yeah, I was shook. I just got back in line.

HK: When that happens, what do you do?

Hemi: Bro, for real, there's not much you can do.

HK: So you didn't say anything in a team meeting or a teammate or anything?

Hemi: Nah, I wore it eh bro. At the time... I carried it. And I could have said something straight away to the ref, that's what I should have done because he might have heard it, but I was a bit, I dunno, body-shock or something.

HK: Is there a referee report option?

Hemi: Nah they don't wanna know. You can't really say anything because the game's over, and if you don't speak up at the time or make a deal out of it then it's too late. All you can do is be pissed off about it. I mean, I tried to find number 6⁵⁴ a few times through the game... But it's not going to go anywhere.

Hemi's response indicates how he was uncertain about what was said, but it also highlights how racism can alienate the victim in a number of ways. The word 'nigger' is as offensive a word with a legacy of white supremacy. The severity of the abuse is met with a numbing shock. Gardiner (2002) has written that for indigenous footballers, racial abuse is a dehumanising process. Hill writes "When the abuse is directed at an individual's ethnicity it strips the victim of their identity, it attacks their status as a human being and denies their right to dignity" (1989: 71). Hemi's reaction shows a form of powerlessness to act outside of the game, resigned to the notion that racist behaviour will not disappear.

It is also relevant that he talks about the experience occurring in high school, where he presents the expectation that it would be pointless to engage authority. The underreporting tendency partly reflects the unequal relationship of player and coach.

⁵⁴ The player who is wearing number 6. Typically the number 6 indicates the rugby position of blind side loose forward

Hemi expressed his unwillingness to respond to racism with a lack of Māori in authority positions such as coaching or management. The institutional power is a barrier for Māori, or Pacific Islanders as minorities. McIntosh (1997) provides an analogous description where a white male athlete in sport could be fairly sure talking to an authority would mean talking to someone of his own race.

When I asked the Group 2 participants if Hemi's story and abuse was familiar, Craig echoed his earlier comments:

Craig (Māori, 36): We got it growing up, playing for [club name], right from juniors all the way through. Back then it was mainly the adults, the ones on the sides giving us shit.

The participants began to talk with more attention to receiving abuse from the side-line supporters. Neihana talked about watching his older sister play rugby for her first game:

Neihana (Māori, 29): Hard bro I remember when the 1st and 2nds⁵⁵ went to support the first girls rugby team Aranui had in years in [year] against Girls High. The team was made of all different ethnicities Māori, Pākehā, Samoan, Cook Island, Tongan..... It was the first game of rugby most had played in their lives and they carved up.⁵⁶ The language from the opposite teams parent supporters who were mostly made of their mothers was targeted to our whole team even our Pākehā sisters like “you black savages.” And one which was specifically said to one of our Māori sisters “Go home coconut”.⁵⁷ Nothing against Girls High it just happened to be it was their supporters and I don't even think they realised what they were saying was wrong cos they actually looked like nice people. But I do remember some of the Girls High team looking embarrassed.

⁵⁵ First xv and second xv are terms for the senior rugby teams at a high school

⁵⁶ Carved up is a colloquial expression to indicate they bested the opposing team

⁵⁷ A term of abuse used against a Pacific Islander

Long and McNamee (2004) write that racist incidences in sport have been neutralised and normalised as misunderstandings, or as part of the game which are not necessarily harmful. Neihana demonstrates this as he describes the abuse directed at his sister's teammate, questioning whether they knew what they were saying was wrong. This was common to both the Lam and Haden stories. In the Lam incident a text was mistakenly sent, and Haden later clarified his choice of words as a miscommunication.

As a final description of experiencing racial abuse, the participants from Group 2 described how their club identity as a kaupapa Māori sports club was tied to a racialised identity:

Neihana (Māori, 29): Awh hard bro, as soon as we step on the field we're discriminated on.

HK: hoah, it sounds like we're gonna hear some stories tonight. Tell me about this discrimination.

Ryan (Māori, 34): We're [club name], it's who we are.

Neihana: Even before a whistle, it's how the ref talks to us, the tone he takes. We're easy targets to get pinged for calls.

Hemi (Māori, 30): When we go out and are playing at other grounds we get the "here comes the crims" thing.

Ryan: "Here come the horis. Lock up your cars!"

The participants in Group 2 talked often about their club identity as a source of pride and community. They also talk about the racialisation of the club through the way they are treated in the way they interpret the behaviour of the referee as biased, and the way they are received and abused at opposing club grounds. Ethnicity and class are used to construct a racial identity of individuals, teams and clubs. Consequently they describe receiving abuse as a normative and expected action towards them.

Challenges to racism in rugby

The focus of this final section is on the ways participants negotiated race or racialised practices. An institution such as rugby has an important role to play in uncovering racism. Instances of racial abuse should not be dismissed as a one-off occurrence or as a misunderstanding. As race permeates across sport, these discussions reflect how participants understand and, through their own agency and also their reading of examples within sport, reject and challenge instances of race and racism. The experiences of the Group 2 and Group 3 participants highlight racial abuse as a frequent occurrence both on the field and from supporters, which deserves attention.

Following Hemi's story of being called in a nigger (above), Craig talked about the role that high-profile athletes have to be outspoken and pro-active in cases of racial abuse and vilification. The participants from group 2 turned towards an international example that highlights how high profile incidents offer some challenges to racism:

Craig (Māori, 36): Then you've got a guy like Timana Tahu⁵⁸ and what he did, he's one guy that spoke up.

HK: Yeah, that's a great point, because he was scrutinised.

Craig: That was his mate. People forget, Johns⁵⁹ was his teammate since they were 18.

Neihana: He's the man.

Craig: But you look at him since then, he's never been the same.

Racial and racist sporting incidents are high profile-media events. The Timana Tahu incident happened in Australia three weeks after the Andy Haden incident. It was especially confronting as it involved two friends who had been teammates, and the walk out occurred in the heat of one of Australia's biggest sporting events. Craig's

⁵⁸ Timana Tahu is a former Australian and Māori international rugby league representative. He was at the centre of controversy when he walked out on his State of Origin Blues team following remarks by Andrew Johns referring to Greg Inglis, a prominent player for the opposition, as a 'black cunt'. It was reported as a one-off incident, but interviews with Tahu later revealed it to be an on-going behaviour. Tahu stated: "I believe I am a role model for children and I did this to show my kids this type of behaviour is wrong. This isn't about me or Andrew Johns. It's about arresting racism and standing up for my beliefs. I want to move on now and I know something positive will come from this."

⁵⁹ Andrew John is a former Australian rugby league representative. He is recognised as one of the greats of the rugby league.

perspective highlights how the action and reactions of the sporting stars involved can be an empowering act. Within a black sport space (Carrington, 1998) vocalising racism can be heroic act. This can bring awareness of racial issues, and give voice and action to those that cannot speak out. Craig further recognises how being vocal on such institutional matters is burdensome. In an interview Tahu describes receiving criticism for taking his stand.⁶⁰

Paradoxically, where racial abuse is a visible behaviour, the response to it is to admonish or to attribute it to an individual's [immoral] behaviour. However, the assumptions informing the abuse is left untouched. While racial abuse is unacceptable, the same logic is acceptable as racialised athletic behaviour. Racial abuse can also be distinguished by its impact. When racialised athletic performance is discussed, racial abuse is reacted to.

Critical studies of sport have advanced understandings of race by highlighting the way that race in sport is limiting of the agency of its social actors within the field.

Carrington writes "...the argument ends up replacing one exaggerated and naive paradigm, namely that sport erases racism and racial discourse through inter-racial contact, with its conceptual opposite, namely that sport can only reproduce dominant racial ideologies and relatedly that black subjects who engage in sport are, in effect, racial cultural dupes" (2010: 174). As such, it highlights the need for understanding how racialisation can be challenged. The group interviews demonstrate how participants refuse or disrupt the racial athletic stereotypes

Niko (Group 3) related to Pat Lam's mediated story, and the associated stereotypes of Pasifika rugby players. He read his own development in rugby, and in particular, how and where a coach tried to play him on the field as an example of racialisation:

Niko (Pasifika, 30): Mate, I always wanted to play five-eight, you know. I told my coach, told my parents, and I had my parents tell my coach but, you

⁶⁰ <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/sport/nrl/timana-tahus-pain-over-racism-stand/story-fnca0von-1226570331909>

know, they always put me at wing or centre. I wasn't big and I definitely wasn't the quickest... I stopped playing for them when they tried to put me at prop.

Niko continued makes the point about being selected or played in non-central positions. He believes that his coach used a racial stereotype to determine his position. Similar to stacking or positional selection, the centre or wing positions are peripheral positions that prioritise speed and strength for their attacking skills. The first five eight position is the central, decision-making position that prioritises skills such as positional kicking, tactical decision making and distribution of the ball. Niko highlights the stakes involved when race becomes a way of seeing players. He states that his coach decided upon his position due to the way he saw him through his ethnicity as Samoan. Niko refutes both the description of race-based attributes, and his coaches decision at the expense of playing rugby.

In a similar vein, Tipene (Group 4) made a statement that rejects the application of one type of stereotypical thinking in response to racially comprised rugby:

Tipene (Māori, 19): They think because you're brown that you're going to be their Fijian 7s star.

Tipene wryly calls upon another sporting stereotype of the Fijian rugby player as he refutes the stereotypes associated with racial athletic stereotypes. The context of his statement is that he rejects having a natural ability to score a try from any situation, or to fulfill the job of playing on the wing. Both Niko and Tipene demonstrate an awareness of how racial athletic superiority is a restraint of who they are, and how they are valued in rugby.

Group 2's discussion described how the club mentality/experience was empowering for them, because they could not but help challenge the stereotypes embedded within particular ways of thinking around stacking. One player commenting that it was his first time he was able to play in his preferred position and that he was affirmed in the way he played – with the way he thought he'd perform.

In regards to the Pat Lam mediated-debated, participants across the groups acknowledged the racial abuse:

HK: Did you guys have any thoughts about it when it happened?

Hemi (Māori, 30): Yeah, it was pretty sad, you know coz he's a guy... He's always been or he tries to be known as a straight up, tough sort of guy.

Craig (Māori, 36): I agree with the bro. He shouldn't have to face that sort of criticism, but of course he's going to. And he knows that. We all know that you're going to get, what, judged differently.

HK: What do you mean?

Craig: If you're brown. Yeah. That wouldn't be his first time.

Ryan (Māori, 34): Yup

Craig: Sometimes you can ignore it. He's feeling the pressure of losing though eh. They were never coming good like everyone thought they should. They had Piri⁶¹ and Ma'a⁶² not playing well. No real first five⁶³.

HK: It's interesting that you say that. They weren't good

Ryan: They had a number of issues

Hamuera: Is that on the coach?

Ryan: Well, yes...

Hemi: yes and no

Ryan: Yeah, it's on everybody. Players got a responsibility to play. At that level, they've got to put the best team together.

Neihana (Māori, 30): You can only coach what's in front of you

Group 2 talked further on the incident, as a predictable or at least a potential outcome given Lam's ethnicity. They reflected on a range of readings of how the construction of race frames the Pat Lam mediated story:

Craig (Māori, 36): but that's a bit bullshit really, eh.

⁶¹ Piri Weepu – former All Black, half-back

⁶² Ma'a Nonu – former All Black, centre

⁶³ First five eight, rugby position

HK: how so?

Craig: When Lam got the job everyone was talking about how good he was.

First, he was good. Then he wasn't. They'll say "he's no good", if he's no good. Whereas Pat gets "Awh, you're a PI, sorry bro, but you're no good."

Hemi (Māori, 30): Sorry Sole.⁶⁴ [laughing]

Craig: But you get it in where, like the Blues are a 'brother team' and the Warriors.

HK: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Who else?

Neihana (Māori, 29): Counties.

HK: Kiwis

Craig: Yeah, these are the 'brother teams' and they'll say we need a bro to coach them, so they can talk to them. That's the other thing they'll say.

HK: Like a Catch 22

Ryan (Māori, 34): Yeah, but in the NRL they'll hire the brothers as the assistant coach [laughing].

The participants are commenting on race as a dynamic interplay by tracing Pat Lam's passage as a coach. Through their humour, they are referring to a layered cluster of meanings. Their description of 'brother teams' are comments on teams that have a high number of Māori and Pasifika players. The composition of the team is reflected in their playing styles which are typically described as exciting or dynamic, but ultimately flawed because of poor concentration, ill-discipline, or lacking stamina and fortitude. In this way 'brother teams' take on the racialised qualities of individual Māori and Pasifikia. Craig's reading, where he describes Pat Lam as good, then not good, is a commentary on how he views the sport-media response to Māori or Pacific Island coaches. Two statements about race that they are making. The first is that Pat Lam was determined to be a good coaching candidate as he 'could talk to them'. That is, due to the shared ethnic background, he would be able to communicate with Pasifikas. This is a further racialisation of Māori and Pasifika as being problematic, as coaches and administrators require a separate skill to communicate with them. As a

⁶⁴ Samoan colloquial term of address

Pasifika coach, he embodies his coaching aptitude in his skin. This is where Craig says “first he was good.” Or as Robbie Deans⁶⁵ said “Pat’s a quality bloke and he obviously relates very well with his people up there.”⁶⁶ When Craig says “Then he wasn’t” is reflective of the criticism that Lam received. “They’ll say ‘he’s no good’, if he’s no good” refers to how white coaches are criticised on their performance, whereas Lam’s ethnicity is prefaced in the criticism he receives. Although it’s not the sole criteria that determined Lam’s coaching passage, it frames his limited racial coporeality, where race was evident in his appointment and his dismissal. Craig calls this out as ‘bullshit’.

Group 1 briefly suggested that a comparison of two sports could challenge stereotypical notions of ‘brother teams’ being unreliable, albeit without naming it as such. When they talked about their fandom and the teams they supported, participants produced a potential way of deracialising teams:

Pete (Māori, 27): The Warriors man. I just hope every year, but yeah, you know how it is.

Tahana (Māori, 31): They’re the heartbreakers, mate.

Grant (Pākehā, 32): I understand that pain seeing as how I’m a fan of the black caps.

This was an effective comparison as the two sports are opposite ends of their ethnic make up. The black caps have a high Pākehā player base, and the Warriors have a high Polyneisan player base. Both of the teams are synonymous with the way they create hope within their fan base, but both have unreliable performances when compared to their win-loss record.

⁶⁵ Former coach of Canterbury Crusaders

⁶⁶ <http://www.stuff.co.nz/sport/rugby/news/401395/Deans-endorses-Lam-for-Blues-job>

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Race and racism are complex concepts, and research must respond by using strategies that continue to charter domains where race is present in sport. Research with sport audiences and participants incorporates the day to day experiences and meanings that they produce. This thesis explored how club rugby players in New Zealand talked about race and racism in focus groups contexts. It explored participants' responses to the mediated stories shown in the focus groups and their talk about their experiences as players and fans. The analytic focus was on the ways in which participants reproduced and/or challenged race and racism in the mediated stories and their own experiences.

Participants' indicated some of the complexities and difficulties of talking about race and racism, particularly in a research context. New Zealand rugby is seen as both a site for racial equality and of racism. Participants' responses to the mediated stories highlighted their ambivalence about what constitutes racism: particular comments/terminology, particular people (as racist) and/or rugby policies. They were more confident in making claims about racism when they talked about their own experiences, as players and fans. For example, the discussions about the claims of a 'darkies' quota were discussed in brief, with many of the participants reflecting on the legitimacy of the claims. In comparison, narratives such as Neihana's story about his sister's team being abused from opponent's parents were detailed, as he prefaced readings of the parents' abuse being oblivious to their actions. These discussions indicate some awareness of race, with stronger resistance coming from the recognition of it at the club/community level.

The analysis demonstrated the ways in which the participants were positioned by discourses available to them, as they talked about race and racism in rugby domains. For example, participants read the Haden 'darkies' media debate as representing either Haden as using racist language or rugby policy, that is, whether the Crusaders had a racial quota. For example, while Group 2 did view the Crusaders as having less Māori and Pasifika on the team, this did not constitute having a racial quota. They were ambivalent about framing Haden and The Crusaders as 'racist', while

simultaneously recognising that in contrast to John Key's claim, racism does happen in rugby (as their experiences highlight).

Situating the focus group talk as sports-chatter demonstrates the ways participants drew on race discourses in their discussions about rugby. Discussions across the groups' reproduced racial codes to describe attributes and skills, regardless of the participants' ethnicity. These discussions occurred in slightly different ways, across differently constituted ethnic groups. An example is how participants discussed Pasifika rugby players in physical terms. Some of the talk demonstrated how available subject positions differed between the different ethnic groups. For example, Pasifika participants made jokes about themselves through statements like "that's the Uso game" (Niko, group 4) and "it's all the taro" (Dan, group 1). Richie's (group 3) statement "They have the natural ability, but in the long run that's not learning to play the game" reflects his position, but is similar in its meaning.

This thesis also highlights the intersection of race and class in participants' talk about their experiences of playing and watching rugby. Participants talked about rugby as a clash of class, alluding to Christchurch high schools to express tensions. Through their narratives they described playing against traditionally affluent schools, and facing ingrained racism. For the participants beating them on the rugby field was a way of challenging the assertions that they were better/worse. Group 2 expressed a similar idea through their club identity as they described discrimination as the practices of referees and interactions at other clubs.

Participants expressed some difference in the way Māori and Pasifika are viewed. For example, Rob (group 4) talked about playing against a Māori and Pasifika team, describing the difficulty of facing physically mature opponents. Whereas Niko (group 3) reflected on being labelled as a 'big Samoan' by his coach, leading to his departure from the team. He discussed the challenges as a choice in asserting his own agency over where and how he could potentially play. Public acts of resistance by professional athletes were assessed for the sacrifice of speaking out about racial abuse, against the attention to the issue of race. These were seen as a valuable resource for participants, bringing voice to issues that were often silenced.

The composition of the groups contributed to the talk produced in those groups. Although all groups were constituted through existing social/sports networks in which participants knew each other, only one was homogeneous with respect to ethnicity, that is group 2 all identified as Māori. The participants in the other groups were of different ethnicities. The inclusion of Māori and Pākehā in group 4, for example, appeared to restrain talk about racism in the mediated stories and in participants' experiences. In contrast, group 2 were willing to talk about racism as demonstrated with an early comment from Neihana, "as soon as we step on the field we're discriminated on."

The research strategy had some success. Viewing news clips in focus groups facilitated a range of talk about rugby in New Zealand and their own experiences as player and fans. Participants were enthusiastic once the discussions began, and the shared fluency with rugby based sports-chatter provided colourful talk. The clips facilitated discussion and racism was discussed through a number of rugby contexts. My roles as a facilitator, Māori, man and rugby fan influenced some of the fluidities of the focus groups as the participants frequently directed discussion towards me.

Future directions

The findings of this research indicate some potentially useful areas for future research. It has highlighted the value of research that initiates discussion about race and racism across groups that participate in sport. Research that focuses on women's perspectives and the intersections of gender and race is the significant area for future studies. Further research could explore overlaps and differences across groups of different gender, nationalities, and ethnicities.

Different research approaches to the composition of focus groups would be valuable. The involvement of diverse participants in focus groups has the potential to further the context of interaction in rugby that is demonstrated by mixed ethnic groups. The Māori focus group provided a different a set of data in that their discussions were informed by their experiences of racism. Using focus groups in this way as sites for

intersecting identities, different perspectives and contexts could enhance attention to the how issues of race are read.

There are a range of directions for pursuing research in to race and sport-media. This research used mediated debates based on controversies that were relatively recent. Other types of media such as film and documentary could also be used to facilitate talk. The growth of new-media and online outlets represent directions to examine whether media practices are changing or reinforcing how race and racism is read and reproduced in sport. The way fans interact and consume sport has also changed through the growth of statistical information and analytics that places a focus on assessing performance. The potential here is that sport commentaries are replaced by statistical categories and information to judge how effective a professional athlete is, in any particular game or season. Future research could use this as an avenue to view whether statistics challenge or maintain consumers' use of traditional racial stereotypes. Social-media, and the ability for professional athletes to connect straight to a community of fans would also provide grounds for researching interactions between sport-media and race.

In summary, this research shows that club rugby players have a range of perspectives and experiences that they used to read and respond to mediated debates of race and racism in New Zealand rugby. Positioning the participants talk as sports-chatter connects the research focus on race and racism to broader social practices within sport, and highlights potential for further research that involves interactions between producers, participants and consumers of sport. This research demonstrates the pervasive and multiple areas where racism is experienced and the range of domains where race, racialisation and race discourse in rugby. This is moderated by the on-going willingness and commitment of the participants involved in the research to play and participate in rugby. By viewing these domains as interconnected, a complex picture of race and racism in rugby is uncovered.

Sports-chatter is a considerable force. In order to challenge race and racism in rugby, it must be understood in its complete context. As the research that concerns the construction of the racial athletic performance and race discourse demonstrates, the

language has developed and circulated over a considerable passage of time. The colosseum of sports-chatter is difficult to disrupt. This research has demonstrated participants, at times, had difficulty with talking about race in the mediated stories, when compared with the frequency and detail they had of experiencing racial abuse.

Public stories continue in mediated accounts about New Zealand rugby. In 2016 another instance of racial abuse in school boy rugby occurred in Christchurch. The story opened with the following sentence: “A Christchurch schoolboy has been found guilty of racially abusing an opponent during an under-14s rugby match.”⁶⁷ That racial abuse in rugby is receiving public attention is significant, as is the aspiration to challenge it. The article states the victim of the abuse was happy with the resolution, making explicit the impacts of racism on the victims. I contend that, while rugby is starting to develop a fluency to act against racism, the action of one young rugby player taking the brunt of responsibility, shifts common practices amongst the rugby community to the sole property of the individual. This thesis demonstrates that racial abuse is only one way that race and racism is made meaningful and circulated through mediated debates, race discourse and practices that are determined by race logic.

I began this thesis with a personal story of being confronted with race as a reflexive connection to the research, and to establish the agenda of challenging racism. While my story touches on the impact of racism, it reveals that my cousins, brother, group leader and I were not equipped to deal with racism in a manner that allowed for it to be publically confronted and openly challenged. This require that racism is identified, which means that it is seen in its full context. Research plays a role in exploring and identifying it through multiple domains. It also means that it is confronted, which requires confidence and skills on the part of those who challenge it. It must also be understood, and by this I mean that it supported through understanding and processes by a wider community.

⁶⁷ <http://www.stuff.co.nz/sport/rugby/84162284/christs-college-rugby-player-found-guilty-of-racial-abuse>

Research continues to explore the complexities and contexts of race and racism. These findings, alongside existing research in to race and sport, should be seen as valuable in developing meaningful policies that confront the ideas and beliefs that contribute to racism across and within rugby domains, where challenging race discourse and race logic should be seen as the responsibility of many within the boundaries of the sport. On the court, on the field, on the pitch or back at the cabins, racism deserves to be overcome.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Letter sent to invite rugby clubs

Appendix 2: Information sheet for participants

Appendix 3: Consent sheet for participants

Appendix 4: Focus group interview guide

Appendix 5: Focus group participants according to age and ethnicity

Appendix 6: News clips

Appendix 1 – Letter sent to invite rugby clubs

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Reading representations of race and racism in New Zealand rugby

Dear [name],

Date:

I'm contacting you in regards to a research project that I am looking to do for my Master's thesis. The research project is going to look at creating a discussion about race and racism in New Zealand rugby. Part of the motivation towards the research comes from the comments Andy Haden made about the Crusaders racial quota in 2010, and also the context behind Pat Lam receiving racial abuse during his coaching tenure in 2011.

The aim of the project is to explore how rugby players read and interpret these rugby news stories. I am looking to involve local club rugby players as participants to get their perspective. I am inviting four Christchurch rugby clubs to participate. I will be seeking to conduct four separate group interviews, with each interview made up of six to eight players from one particular club. I will screening some of news stories about the Andy Haden, and the Pat Lam incidents, and talking to participants about what they think and if it raises any issues.

I would like to ask for permission to approach members of your club. I will be happy to attend a board meeting to explain more about the proposed project to the Club Board, or to meet with you to discuss the project. I appreciate you taking the time to read this.

Best regards,
Hamuera Kahi
Aotahi: School of Māori and Indigenous Studies
University of Canterbury
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The project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee.

Appendix 2

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INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

You are invited to participate as a subject in the research project - 'Reading representations of ethnicity and race in New Zealand Rugby.'

What is this research project about?

The aim of this project is to discuss playing, watching and following rugby, and to explore some recent controversial issues in terms of the ethnic difference of New Zealand rugby.

Your involvement in this project will be to participate in a focus group discussion consisting of six or seven rugby players from your rugby club.. The interview will last between 1 to 1.5 hours.

The interview will encourage open discussion. Two video clips will be shown about recent, controversial news stories relating to the Super Rugby competition. A series of questions will be asked and you will be encouraged to talk about your views. The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed.

Who is doing the research?

The project is being carried out by Hamuera Kahi, as a requirement for the degree of Master of Arts, under the supervision of Dr. Tiina Vares and Associate Professor Lyndon Fraser.

Confidentiality:

Any data you provide will be kept confidential. The focus groups will be recorded and transcribed. However, you will not be identified in the recordings. I will not tell anyone that you have taken part in the focus group. All participants in the focus group will be asked to respect the confidentiality of their fellow participants. All conversation in the focus group interview should be kept confidential.

When writing up the study, you will be given a pseudonym (code name), and identifying details may be changed. In the research, I will use quotes from the focus

groups to help illustrate the points that are being made. Some of these quotes may come from you. I will not use any quotes that might reveal who you are, however.

Any identifying information you provide will be kept in a locked office or on a password protected computer. Information without identifying details may be stored and processed on a home computer. Transcripts will be stored and used for five years, and then transcripts and recordings will be destroyed.

Participation:

Your participation in this study is voluntary and if you agree to take part in the study, but then decide to withdraw that is fine. Let me know and I will take you off the list. During and after the focus groups, it will not be possible for participants to withdraw. I will remind participants beforehand that due to the nature of the group discussion, once the focus group has been completed, data cannot be withdrawn..

If you would like to receive a copy of the interview transcript, let me know, and I'll make a note on the consent form. I will send your transcript by email, if that is what you prefer, or by post in an envelope marked confidential. If you want anything corrected or amended on the transcript, please let me know and I will make those changes.

Ethics Approval

Ethical approval for the project has been obtained from the Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury.

If you have questions:

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in this research project, or the procedures you can discuss them with me or my supervisor

Contact details:

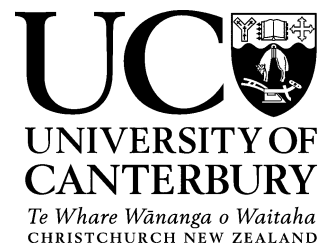
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CONSENT FORM

‘Reading representations of ethnicity and race in New Zealand rugby’

I have read and understood the description of the above-named project. On this basis I agree to participate in the project, and I consent to publication of the results of the project with the understanding that anonymity will be preserved.

I understand that I it will not be possible to withdraw during or after the focus groups.

I note that the project has been reviewed by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee.

NAME (please print):

Signature:

Date:

Appendix 4

Focus group - Semi-structured interview schedule

Questions – Set 1

How long have you been playing rugby?

- Follow-up question: What got you into rugby?

Which teams do you support?

How do you follow these teams?

What other forms of media do you use to follow rugby?

Questions - Set 2

The Andy Hayden controversy:

Screening of two news clips.

Do you remember hearing about this story when it happened?

How did you hear about it e.g. newspaper, television, news, internet site, facebook?

What do/did you think about Hayden's use of the term 'darkies'?

At the time Richard Loe was quoted as saying: 'seriously if there's an unwritten rule in the Crusaders, it's not about ethnic stuff. It's been long said that there are two main criteria for Crusaders' players: 1). A good person and 2) a good rugby player. In that order'. Do you agree?

Questions - Set 3

The criticism of Pat Lam:

Screening of two news clips.

Do you remember hearing about this story when it happened?

How did you hear about it e.g. newspaper, television, news, internet site, facebook?

What did you think about the criticism the Blues received about their performance?

Do you relate to this story?

What did you make of Pat Lam's response to the interview?

Questions – Set 4

Two weeks ago (26 April) there was an article on stuff.co.nz about Pasifika and Māori men being a sports commodity in leagues such as NRL, NFL, global rugby and basketball.

- Why do you think this is?
- Prompt: What did you think are the challenges for Pasifika and Māori in these types of sporting environments?

Wrap-ups and final mihi

Appendix 5

Participants

Group 1 – Christchurch men’s division 3 team

Mike	Māori – 29
Grant	Pākehā – 32
Dan	Pasifika – 28
Pete	Māori – 27
Tahana	Māori – 31

Group 2 – Christchurch men’s division 3 team

Neihana	Māori – 29
Hemi	Māori -30
Ryan	Māori - 34
Craig	Māori – 36

Group 3 - Christchurch men’s division 2 team

Miles	Pākehā/Māori -27
Les	Asian – 28
Richie	Pākehā – 29
Niko	Pasifika - 30

Group 4- Christchurch men’s colts team and assistant coach

Lagi	Pasifika – 21
Stewart	Pākehā – 20
Tipene	Māori - 19
Stan	Māori – 32
Troy	Pākehā – 21
Rob	Pākehā -20

Appendix 6

Mediated news clips

Haden stands firm on Crusaders racial claims

- <http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/sport/rugby/3749548/Haden-stands-firm-on-Crusaders-racial-claims>
- time: 2 minutes 49 seconds

synopsis:

- introduction to the story
- comments from John Key – "factually incorrect" and "offensive"
- comments from sports minister Murray McCully – "My view on that is that the comments are not only factually incorrect but they are also offensive"
- background to the incident, describing the Deaker show, and the topic

Calls for Haden's scalp over 'darkies' comment

- <http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/sport/rugby/3752918/Calls-for-Hadens-scalp-over-darkies-comment>
- time: 1 minute 13 seconds

synopsis:

- introduction to the story – calls for Haden to be fired from role as RWC ambassador
- comments from John Key – "offensive", but no call to fire Haden
- background to the incident, describing the Deaker show, and the topic
- comments from race relations Jorie de Bris – "inappropriate"
- comments from NZRFU CEO Steve Tew – "not suitable"
- comments from green party MP Kevin Hague – "he should be dismissed"
- Haden reported to have backtracked from some of his comments – "the policy is probably not written down"

Blues' Pat Lam hits out at racist criticism

- <http://www.stuff.co.nz/sport/rugby/super-rugby/6725018/Blues-Pat-Lam-hits-out-at-racist-criticism>
- time: 1 minutes 40 seconds
- synopsis:
- Pat Lam responds to racial abuse
- Racism on social media networks being directed at him because of the Auckland Blues poor performance.
- Fine with being criticised for performance on the field
- Reflects on his parents, who migrated to New Zealand from Samoa
- Protective of his team, especially those who Māori and Pasifika

- Discusses who will be named in the team, and the need to play better
- Comments from the players on the need to play better

How racist are rugby fans? - TV News Video | TVNZ

- <http://tvnz.co.nz/breakfast-news/racist-rugby-fans-video-4829756>
- time: 5.40 seconds

synopsis:

- Introduction
- Pat Lam responds to question about being racially abused, and becomes emotional in his response
- Interview with NZ Pasifika rugby great, Pita Fatialofa
- Question about Pita's reaction – supports Pat
- Lam's reaction? – Pat been through times, and impact on family
- Surprised by abuse? – not surprised, faceless network. The Blues aren't playing well.
- Is this a rugby issue, or fans? – reaction to Blues performance, but they'll bounce back
- Ever encountered racism? – Yes, through coaching, one of his players was abused, but the team kept winning, cheap shots from the crowd
- Message to racist comments? – Be good sports